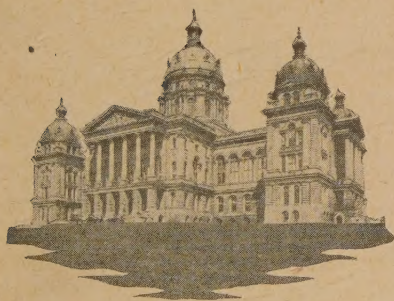


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ANNALS OF IOWA

A HISTORICAL QUARTERLY

JULY, 1939



PUBLISHED BY THE
IOWA STATE DEPARTMENT OF
HISTORY AND ARCHIVES

DES MOINES, IOWA

THIRD SERIES

VOL. XXII, No. 1

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ORA WILLIAMS, Curator

ANNALS OF IOWA

ORA WILLIAMS, Editor

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DES MOINES, IOWA, JULY, 1939

THIRD SERIES

BRINGING THE STAGE COACH TO IOWA

1837 - 1842

By

KENNETH E. COLTON

Seldom does the tale of travel fail to stir the imagination of men, old and young. In every age an aura clings about those who visit far horizons which makes heroes of men who engage in travel as a business, be he the captain of an East Indian Merchantman, the driver of the United States Mail Stage, or, in these later days, the pilot of an airliner. But for the America of the middle years of the last century, there was no one who could rival in fascination and attraction the lordly "knight of the ribbons," the driver of the stage. Seen by all the country side on his regular runs, his skillful control and physical mastery over the horses and coach in his charge had an appeal which the inert handling of a wheel, a lever, or a switch could not meet. He was the personification of that rugged, self-reliant individualism of which we sometimes vainly boast today, but the virtues of which the nineteenth century knew well.

All too easily forgotten, however, behind the colorful driver and his well groomed stage horses was a business, and an organization, which, while romantic to the sentimentalist who dreams nostalgically of yesterday, dealt as much in profit and loss—too frequently in the latter the stager would say—as any occupation or profession. Another error into which we frequently fall is that in our glib generalities about this era of travel we confuse the hey day of the stage with the years when it was actually a struggling enterprise.

The present sketch is an attempt to sift a few rumors and to contribute a few facts to the journal of the first days of the stage coach in Iowa, before these records are too completely lost.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

The course of stage coach operation in Iowa was materially influenced by certain conditions and events which should properly be noted before sketching those years. The first of these was that when Iowa was opened to settlement in the second third of the nineteenth century, she enjoyed the incalculable advantage of having neighbors in the states on the east and south who some years before had passed the raw frontier period. The second was really a series of events, the appearance in the middle and later portions of the century of a host of mechanical inventions affecting the transportation and communication systems of the world.

One result of having older settlements near by when the territory was thrown open in 1833 was that the pioneer period for much of Iowa was sharply abbreviated. With the latest developments in manufactured goods, services, and ideas available from communities across the Mississippi and south of the Des Moines River, true frontier life on Iowa soil was naturally brief in duration. For the stage coach this meant that the period of time from the introduction of the first stage into Iowa to the successful operation of a fleet of Concord and Troy coaches was much shorter than would ordinarily have been the case in a frontier region. The very introduction and the later spread of stage systems in Iowa, owed much to the relatively easy access the settlers had to information and experience with stages in Illinois and Missouri.

Of greater general importance than the first, the second factor had a special effect on Iowa, because the flood of developments and improvements in communication reached Iowa while it was still a comparative stripling, and hastened that much the more the transition from frontier settlement to a stable community. Although the impact of new ways and modes of doing things upon the customs of the past is well illustrated to us in the example of Japan, we fail to fully realize the tremendous force of this impact upon communities so young that they have no well established past to change. It is hard, for instance, for a social historian to gauge the effect the early appearance of the railroad in the west had upon the future course of Iowa history. Though involved in the eco-

nomics of transportation, it intertangles also with the whole social, cultural, agricultural, and political life of the state; the degree of its influence, though uncertain, was undeniably great. But this much is certain, it had a tremendous influence on the direction of stage coach history in Iowa. In the first place, its early appearance obviously shortened the period of stage operation. And in shortening it, it likewise concentrated the development of the Iowa systems in a span of years even shorter than its normally brief period would have been if affected only by the close proximity to districts where relatively advanced systems of staging were successfully operating.

The farther west one went, the shorter was the period of time between the appearance of the first stage and that of the first railroad train. The east had had stages in commercial operation since about 1732, a century before the steam railway cars appeared.¹ Stages had entered Ohio well before the turn of the nineteenth century, but they were not in regular operation in Kentucky until the 1820's, they did not reach Illinois until 1831, while Wisconsin had its first stage line operating in 1836.² If the railroad is a symbol of modernity, then indeed Iowa's pioneer period was remarkably short. In contrast to the years of gradual development in the East, Iowa had only eighteen brief years between the introduction of the first stage coach line in the territory and 1855, when the first railroad began puffing along the rails and rolling down the grade west of Davenport, just twenty-two years after Iowa was first opened to settlers. Though staging continued a prosperous and vigorous business after 1855 for many years, its days were numbered, its death already tolled.

The early coming of the railroad had another effect on the stage coach less readily recognized. The early entrance of the Iron Horse into Iowa was largely responsible for the dearth of information concerning the later days of the stage. The eager absorption of every Iowa town in the contests to locate railroads through their community, and the delirious excite-

¹Seymour Dunbar, *A History of Travel in America*, new edition, (Tudor Publishing Co., New York, 1937), p. 180.

²John W. Coleman, *Stage Coaches in the Blue Grass Country*, p. 67; *Journal Illinois Historical Society*, XIII, 197; *Wisconsin Historical Magazine*, III, 199.

ment with which the latest news of the progress of the surveys and construction work was greeted, buried all notice of the every day activities of the stage under the avalanche of railroad hysteria. To those invaluable chroniclers of contemporary history, the editors of the weekly newspapers, the coming railroads quickly eclipsed the stage coach in news value. Their judgment of news has cost us much in a record of this era.

While from the vantage point of a hundred years the development of stage lines between 1833 and 1842 appear to have been both satisfactory and in full proportion to the needs of the territory, we may be sure it did not meet the wants of the settlers in Iowa. To them the extension of stage service unquestionably appeared slow and inadequate, but, unfortunately, the stage was a business proposition and not a philanthropy. It had to be assured of a profit from operation which the frontiers of Iowa could not always guarantee.

A community must be able to pay for the transportation service it enjoys, the higher the form of service, the greater the investments involved, and the larger the profit demanded by the proprietor for risking the enterprise. All pioneer communities suffer from the limits this imposes upon the extension of transportation services to their settlements. First and foremost, the stage, like any other form of transportation service, from the lowly foot messenger to the modern air fleets, had to be able to look forward to a steady predictable demand for its services. This meant that the problem of the extension of stage coach routes into Iowa was intertwined with the problems of population, for population was a rough index of the amount of passenger traffic and business demands that could be expected. On the frontier the matter of population resolved itself into a question of pay loads, and more specifically, of a pay load, the return trip. Now the incoming stage with its cargo of passengers jammed inside, and in the "boot" newspaper stock for the pioneer editor, plus calico, muslin, bonnets, hardware, etc., likewise stuffed in the rear boot or tied on top, all this usually paid for the incoming service. But on the return trip few passengers could be relied upon, and with little or no industry or commercial life beyond their villages, there

was little freight to send out, consequently the load was often far from sufficient to maintain such an advanced service as the stage. The pioneer communities never liked to recognize this limitation, and would vehemently deny its truth if such a statement was made. But the Post Office Department, which had to keep a close check on such things, believed otherwise with distressing frequency. It must be recognized that for many years Iowa territory was unable to meet the necessary minimum conditions which would permit successful and profitable stage coach operation.

There is another aspect of the relationship between population and the stage coach which might well be mentioned. In general the higher forms of transportation systems follow the streams of population, rather than lead them, for reasons similar to those indicated in the paragraph above. On rare occasions transportation services do lead the stream of population, however, as, for instance, the case of the Great Northern Railroad of the late seventies, and the boom-dream railroads of the trans-Missouri west of the same period. But even in such instances, either a federal subsidy was in hand, or the speculators were desperately trying to protect investments sunk in the ventures. In any case, a profit was eventually expected. The stage coach in Iowa falls in both classifications: it was both a follower and a leader of the waves of settlement.

The stage could play this dual role only by reason of the substantial subsidy it enjoyed from the government in form of a contract for transporting the United States mail. Assured by his contract of a dependable sum, which in most cases would meet the larger overhead costs of operation, the proprietor could then look forward to a profit from the extra passengers and freight carried. This mail contract was of almost supreme importance on frontier settlements, for it overcame to a considerable measure the absence of a pay load in the returning stage coach. In Iowa the stage lines followed the mail routes very closely, both because of the needed subsidy, and because where mail demands were heaviest there the centers of population usually were also.

By means of the extension of stage service made possible by this mail subsidation, the marginal districts for the operation

of stages were pushed still farther west, and by virtue of this, the influx of settlers and farmers into areas was hastened as it could not have been otherwise. Small wonder that communities became frenzied in their eagerness to obtain a stage mail. If only a two-horse hack, that was glory enough.

This characteristic of stage routes—that they followed population—was true in most pioneer communities, except, perhaps, in the flood periods of immigration, such as the 1850's, when the number of onrushing emigrants made it possible to extract a profit from the one trip almost to suffice for the two.

MAIL—AND THE PIONEER

The above indicates how important the mails were to the stage proprietor, but important as they were to him, they were of even greater importance to the settlers. When we stop to realize that the impoverished mill worker from New England had relatives or friends anxiously waiting word from him, and that the land poor farmer from the hilly steps of West Virginia, North Carolina, and the mountainous east likewise had acquaintances and relation eager to learn if he had found his El Dorado in Iowa territory, and that the land speculator too had business associates who wanted to know how fast the proposition was selling, then we can understand in a small measure the occasion for the continuous pressure upon the Post Office Department and members of Congress for new post offices, post roads, and improvements of all kinds which would hasten the arrival of the news, as well as speed it on its way.

When for six cents we can dispatch a letter across the continent in one day by airmail, and at half that cost if sent by ordinary mail, the heavy postage bills our grandfathers had to foot, for the slow service received seems really high. Based upon a single sheet, which, of course, could be folded, one paid the following rates: on all mail to be delivered within a radius of thirty miles, six cents, between 30 and 80 miles, 10 cents, between 80 and 100 miles, 12½ cents, and between 150 and 400 miles, 18¾ cents; all mail sent over 400 miles was charged 25 cents.³ Because the vast majority of the Iowans

³ *U. S. Statutes at Large*, 105, 18th Congress, 2d Session, March 25, 1825.

had left homes in New England or other distant points in the east, and the majority of the remainder had come from the "middle east" of Kentucky and Ohio, or Pennsylvania, it was only rarely that the customary fee demanded by the postmaster was less than 25 cents.

The fractional prices indicated in the postal regulations presents another sidelight on pioneer life a hundred years ago. The United States minted few fractional half-cent coins, and none in quarter-cent denominations; its total of metallic coins was far insufficient for the business needs of the country. The $12\frac{1}{2}$ cent and $18\frac{3}{4}$ cent charges were a recognition on the part of the government that the commercial business of the nation depended upon the wide circulation of foreign coins. Generally, but especially for the Mississippi Valley area, the settlers used the Spanish real, worth about $12\frac{1}{2}$ cents, for their business transactions. There was also a smaller piece called a half real, worth $6\frac{1}{4}$ cents, all based upon the Spanish "Pieces O' Eight," which actually was the Spanish dollar, worth eight reals. Since the real was also termed a "bit," the origin of our "two bits" phrase is apparent. It was with these Spanish reals and half reals that the settler usually settled his post office accounts.

The postal rates indicated above were in effect during the first years of Iowa's settlement, until the postal law of 1845 changed these 1825 rates and began the downward trend which has given us the present three cent stamp.

Because the gummed postage stamp was not yet in use, the Post Master General had to adopt certain procedures to insure the collection of postage which may strike us as strange today, but were the only practical solution of unstamped mail service. To insure payment, letters had to come collect. This was a C.O.D. proposition, either the letter was paid for in cash, or else the postmaster could not deliver the mail, for he was accountable for the sums due on the letters received by him. To the settler who was hard put to save enough to make the \$1.25 per acre cash payment for his claim at the next bidding at the Land Office, it not infrequently happened that he was obliged to wait days and even weeks before he could procure the cash necessary to pay for a letter he knew was

lying all this while in the postoffice. Cash was necessary for another reason, the postmaster's pay was usually a percentage of the receipts of his office, ranging from eight per cent on receipts over \$2400 to thirty per cent on sums less than \$100 received over a year's time. It may be assumed, however, that on occasions the postmaster would stretch a point and accept payment "in kind," but for self-protection could do so only sparingly.⁴

Letters, however, were less frequently sent than now, and cost or no cost, we can appreciate the value these pioneer settlers, farmers, lawyers, merchants, and all attached to each letter; it was well worth the price.

In the first years on a frontier the mails were most frequently carried on horseback, usually on a twice-a-week schedule, though almost as often on only a once-a-week route. Obviously such meagre service could not be long satisfactory to a growing frontier town. The impossibility of carrying more than a moderate amount of mail made the life of the horse-mail contractor a hard one, always the butt of bitter denunciation when heavy rains or deep snows prevented his trip, he was unmercifully berated if it so happened that the mail was so heavy that it could not all be carried in the first trip. The first service in Iowa was, of course, the horseback mails. These routes could be established by the Post Master General whenever in his judgment the need was clearly demonstrated. It is not strange, therefore, that the most frequent petition received by the Post Master General and the members of Congress were those praying for new or increased mail service.

The power to grant is also the power to destroy, so say students of constitutional history. And the power of the Post Master General certainly included the power to delay, if not to withhold a service which might well destroy the hopes of any ambitious town. This charge was even occasionally hurled at the Post Master General. The discretionary power lodged with the head of the Post Office Department, to establish or increase the service of mail to a given community, and to okay the appointment of postmasters, made him and his department one of the most potent of all in the then federal government.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 106.

The extent of this power is easily recognized when we remember that hundreds, if not thousands, of new communities were springing up yearly in the districts of Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri, and Iowa, and we must add to these the later areas of Minnesota and the whole territory west of the Missouri which likewise wanted post offices and post routes. The means for building and feeding a huge political machine afforded by such opportunities were not lost on the alert men schooled under Andrew Jackson or upon those who believed they had to fight fire with fire. It was no accident that the custom developed within both political parties to appoint an active political head to the cabinet post of Post Master General; of no recent origin, it stems straight from the time of Old Hickory and the volcanic politics of his day.

Although glad to get any kind of mail service, the residents of ambitious and boastful towns on the fringes of settlement were never satisfied long. In the days of the first settlers, 1833-42, this expressed itself in a demand for first the horse-mails, then the stage: the "stage-wagon," the two-horse coach, or hack, and the highest type of stage luxury of all, the post coach, drawn by a four-horse team.

The settlers of Iowa, moreover, were long familiar with the stage coach, having known and experienced it many years before they first rolled over the rutty roads of this territory. If they had never experienced them before, the emigrants over any one of the three main arteries of emigrant travel westward were almost sure to have encountered the stage at one time or another. Those who traveled from Buffalo by lake steamer to Chicago may either have come to Buffalo by stage, or by the Hudson River and the Erie Canal. But if they sought to cut across the Michigan peninsula by stopping at Niles, Michigan, or Michigan City, instead of rounding that jutting of land by water, they almost had to take the stage to continue their westward journey. This overland journey was the customary practice of those who came without too much "impedimenta." The traveler over the southern route usually boarded a steamer at Pittsburgh for the Ohio River to St. Louis portion of the journey, and continued by steamer, perhaps, on the northern leg of the trip to Iowa lands. He who traveled this most

popular of all the routes during the first years, may well have taken a stage to reach Pittsburgh, the jumping off place for the river journey, or else he undoubtedly saw stages at the landings of many a town at which the steamer stopped on the way. The third road was the overland route from Ohio through central Indiana and southern Illinois, with branches which led to St. Louis and also towards southern Iowa. This was the route generally patronized by those who came in their own ox wagons or carts, particularly those living in the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois who were restlessly continuing a trek to Iowa or beyond. If one didn't go in the family wagons, the journey then, of course, had to be made by stage, a service with which this district was exceptionally well provided.

It should be remembered that by this time the stage coach was reaching a high level of excellence in the east, both in construction and in operation. The Abbott-Downing company of Concord, New Hampshire, had produced the first American leather spring stage in 1827.⁵ By the middle of the eighteenthirties the fame of this design was rapidly spreading to all parts of the world. Soon standardized, by the time the Concord stage appeared in Iowa it had achieved a pattern from which it little varied for the next forty years. At about the same time the Eaton & Gilbert Company of Troy, New York, began to manufacture a similar type coach, which as the "Troy" was to become almost, if not quite, as famous as the Concord.⁶ When the settlers asked for stage coach service,

⁵Milo M. Quaife, *Chicago's Highways Old and New*, (D. F. Keller & Co., Chicago, Ill., 1923), p. 154-6; *Mississippi Valley Historical Association*, XXIII, 4.

The leather spring coach was in use in Europe and England long before Abbott and Downing made Concord synonymous with that type of construction. In an English dictionary published in London about 1810, a coach is defined as "a commodious vehicle for travelling, suspended on leathers, and moved on wheels. Their invention was owing to the French, about the reign of Francis I. They have, like other things, been brought to their present perfection by degrees: at present they seem to want nothing, either with regard to ease or magnificence. Louis XIV of France made divers sumptuary laws for restraining the excessive richness of coaches, prohibiting the use of gold and silver therein; but they have been neglected.

"In England, and most parts of Europe, the coaches are drawn by horse; except in Spain, where they use mules. . . .

"The coachman is ordinarily placed on a seat raised before the body of the coach; but the Spanish policy has displaced him in that country by a royal ordinance on occasion of the duke of Olivarez, who learned that a very important secret had been discovered and revealed by his coachman: since which time, the place of the Spanish coachman is the same with that of the French stage-coachman, and our postillion," in the rear.

New Royal Encyclopaedia, and Cyclopaedia; Complete and Modern and Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, I, 540.

⁶Archer Butler Hulbert, *The Old National Road, a Chapter of American Expansion*, (Columbus, 1901), p. 83; Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

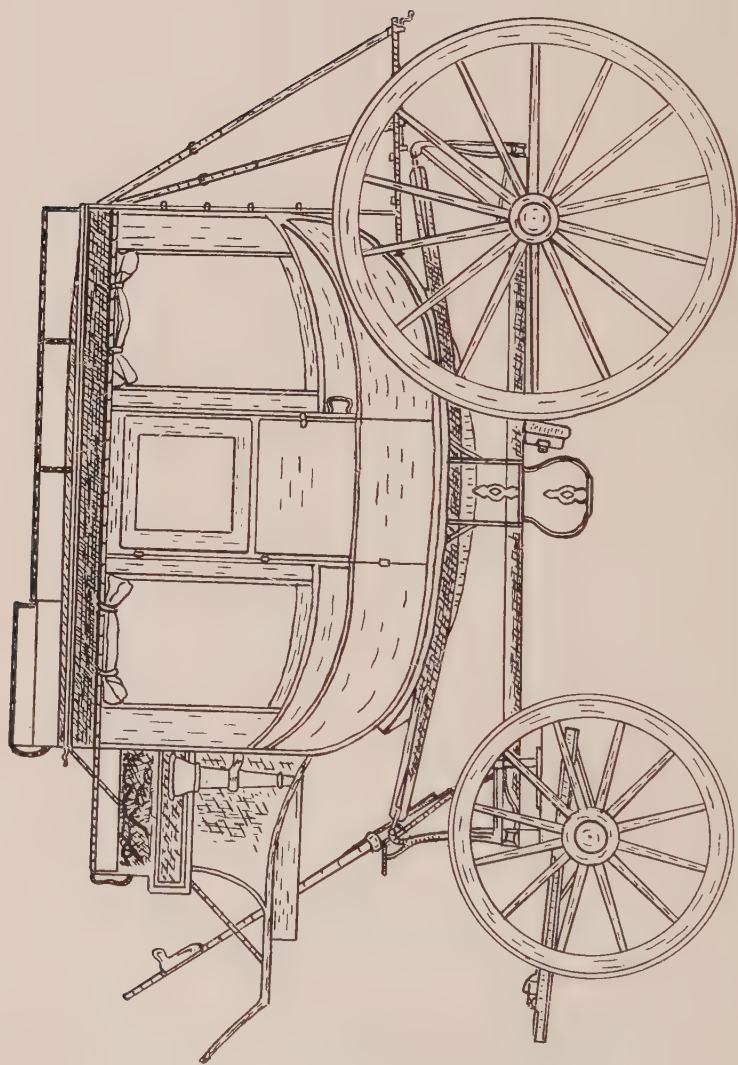
therefore, they were demanding a service which had long since passed its infancy, and with which they were well acquainted.

FIRST ARRIVAL OF STAGE COACHES

Naturally the place the stage would first appear in Iowa would be near one of the larger populated towns. In 1836 there were but two towns in Iowa which could justifiably claim both the population and the importance to induce a venturesome stage to risk an appearance; Du Buque and Burlington. From all the writer has discovered, the first stage coach came into Iowa at Dubuque, due to the then superiority of the lead mines as an attraction to settlers and speculators.

Though the lead mines of Galena and vicinity had been discovered and were actively exploited from the 1820's on, every Iowan knows that Julien Du Buque had worked many years before in the lead mines of the place to which he later gave his name. The relationship between the two towns had always been considerable, both socially and commercially; it was more than just that of business rivals. It was the lead miners from Galena who gave the first boom of settlement at Dubuque when the Iowa lands were opened to white settlement, June 1, 1833. This relationship between the two, and the speculative nature of all mining in those days, probably explains why Dubuque was the focus for early settlement in northern Iowa. This also may explain why an occasional stage may have appeared at Timothy Jordan's Ferry, on the east shore of the Mississippi, as early as 1835. This is only a conjecture, based solely upon the information that in the fall of 1835 "J. D. Carson and Jonathan Haines built an open sleigh . . . designed to run between Galena and Dubuque." More than an open sleigh, it was covered, and equipped with doors, windows, seats, and was said to be as "comfortable as the saloon on a steamboat." The engine was too small, however, and this sleigh seems never to have inaugurated a service.⁷ From the fact that it was to be a steam sleigh, the inference is that it was not a stage sleigh so much as a modified steamboat for traveling over the river ice. Only on the assumption that the stage coach could not be far away if such a special service was

⁷*History of Jo Daviess County*, (H. F. Kett, 1878), p. 477.



CONCORD STAGE COACH

From the Abbott-Downing Co. coach books and a photograph.

contemplated for the dull winter season can a stage coach be awarded to Dubuque in 1835.

The records for a stage in Iowa in 1836 have much better grounds to rest upon, though this year also failed to witness a regularly scheduled service in operation. The stimulus to staging in 1836 arose from the establishment of the Territory of Wisconsin in April of that year. When news of this event reached the towns in that new territory, which included the Iowa District on the west side of the Mississippi, they immediately began laying eager claims to the location of the first capitol site. Dubuque vigorously pushed her claims, but while boastful, she was also exceedingly anxious for a stage service connection, this would both substantiate her claims to importance and likewise bring fresh settlers to her side of the river. This petulant anxiety may have produced the following from the editor of the *Dubuque Visitor*, though it surely is not in accord with the records of the Post Office Department:⁸

From official [sic] documents in our possession, we discover the mail contractor is bound to convey the mail between Galena, Du Buque, and Peru, "*three times a week in stages*"; and the Postmaster at Galena instructed to regulate the days to suit the interests and convenience of the citizens concerned. Are the citizens of Du Buque concerned in this matter? The mail has been irregular in its arrivals and departure from the beginning. . . . The mail that was due on Wednesday last came the next day, and the carrier, fatigued with his extraordinary exertion, leaving his mail bag in town, took a small jaunt into the country by way of recreation, and did not return until the next day. . . . The mail was due again on Sunday, but the carrier being probably conscientiously opposed to travelling on that day, it did not come until brought by a steamboat on Monday.

The noteworthy part of this complaint was the editor's disgusted remark that

The variety of *times* in which the mail makes its trips is only equalled by the variety of *means* used in its conveyances. It comes on horseback, in wagons, big and little, in carriages, occasionally in stages, and not infrequently . . . [by] steamboat. . . .

That the editor's reference to stage service was not made up out of whole cloth is indicated in another item in the *Visitor*

⁸*Dubuque Visitor*, May 18, 1836.

on, October 19, 1836, in which editorial fun is poked at a number of the town's residents:

A goodly number of 'Visitors' left Du Buque on the 14th of Sept., destined for Chillicothe, Ohio, but after travelling as far as Indianapolis, Ia., became so much *worn out*, and being destitute of covering, returned to Du Buque. We . . . put them into an *old worn out two* horse stage, (we like uniformity,) and cautioned them to keep the driver from using them as a seat (which is the common practice,) and they would probably see their friends in Chillicothe in time to receive their new-year's gift.⁹

While the above offers good circumstantial evidence, more concrete testimony that a stage rumbled over the streets of Dubuque in 1836 was offered in the *Visitor* of the same date. On the 25th of November of 1836, the first legislature of the Territory of Wisconsin assembled at Belmont, Wisconsin, then a small town, hastily built to accommodate the legislature. As close as Dubuque got to a regular stage seems to have been during the session of the legislature, a cause and effect fact which Dubuque was to experience several times later in the years to come. At any event, on October 19 a daily stage line was announced as operating between Belmont, Wisconsin, and Jordan's Ferry on the eastern shore of the Mississippi.¹⁰ Even though the legislature was in session, a daily stage was an exceedingly advanced service for the small town of Dubuque, one which she alone could hardly have sustained to the profit of the proprietor. The profit motive, however, may have had little to do with it. Since Dubuque was zealously seeking by every means possible to obtain the location of the second capitol of Wisconsin territory, the extra service may have been maintained to afford all possible communication with the legislature. Even so, it was a losing gamble all the way around. The service apparently did not survive the adjournment of the law makers at Belmont.

These first stages, except possibly the Belmont line, probably all came by way of Galena, which had eastern and southern stage connections. The actual stages themselves may have come from these stage lines or from the stock of the hotel or

⁹"Ia." a hundred years ago was the accepted abbreviation of Indiana, not Iowa, which in 1836 was hardly a name.

¹⁰*Dubuque Visitor*, October 19, 1836.

livery stable men of the lead metropolis, who were beginning to keep a number of carriages on hand for the use of private parties and for those who were too impatient to await the departure of the regular stage.

Although Dubuque had to be satisfied with a stage service which stopped just short of her side of the river in 1836, she had high hopes for obtaining in 1837 a stage either to the east or to the south. With the change of the territorial capitol from Belmont, east of the Mississippi, to Burlington, naturally enough Dubuque's interests in 1837 were directed mostly south.

The southern once-a-week horseback mail had never been very satisfactory even when first established in 1836, and as each month brought new settlers to Iowa, it became even less so. The postmaster of Fort Madison, at the southern end of the route, was empowered to employ an additional service to cover the route once a month, but even that was not sufficient. The editor of the *Iowa News* bitterly remarked on at least one occasion that "the post master here has been compelled to furnish additional mail bags, and the carrier other means of transportation than on horseback." Whether this was a stage service the editor does not enlighten us. He, however, does not miss an opportunity to inform his complaining subscribers in the south that they could not expect prompt delivery of their newspaper until "our mails [are] carried in a stage."¹¹

The disproportionate amount of stage service the eastern part of the territory enjoyed, Wisconsin proper, was likewise compared with that of the Iowa District:¹²

In the Iowa District, which numbers near, if not equal with the east in population, there is not one hundred miles of stage lines in operation, while on the east, stages are run in almost every direction.

Evidence indicates that in 1837 the Iowa District was beginning to find the Mississippi River not an unmixed blessing. The residents along the Iowa shore certainly had ample opportunity to witness the obstacle this mighty river presented to

¹¹*History of Dubuque County*, W. A. and K. C. Goodspeed (Goodspeed Historical Association, Chicago, n. d.), p. 59; *Iowa News*, September 30, 1837; *Dubuque Visitor*, January 18, 1837.

¹²*Iowa News*, August 26, 1837.

would-be settlers, though sometimes they missed the point. The *Dubuque Visitor* complained that¹³

On the north, east, and south of us, there are stage routes leading to this part of the territory, consequently our having none is a great public inconvenience, because the traveller may proceed until he comes to our border, then as we do not afford him the means of conveyance, he must turn his course. This operates as a total prohibition to travelling through this country . . . in the midst of the *lead mines*, yet we have not a single stage route.

The editor failed, obviously, to see that the river barred any easy extension of the stage lines in Illinois and Wisconsin, and also that the river hindered the easy and steady westward sweep of the oncoming emigrant. He, of course, did not see that the stages not only bring population to an area, but must depend upon the population of that area for bringing its coaches there.

Despite these mingled complaints and hopes, and the promising appearance of the inspector for the Post Office Department in the territory in September, all hopes of northern Iowa for stages in 1837 were in vain.¹⁴ Defeated in the struggle for the territorial capitol, Dubuque likewise lost the distinction of having the first stage route in Iowa. The Dubuque-Galena line was neither the first nor the second, being no better than the fifth established, and as for the southern route, it was five years before a regularly operating stage covered the gap between Dubuque and the southern towns.

Dubuque failed to be the first Iowa terminus for a regular stage for several reasons. When the Wisconsin territorial legislature decided in early December, 1836, that the future capitol of Wisconsin territory should be Burlington, that center immediately enjoyed an advantage which Dubuque could not match. In addition, the southern part of Iowa was filling with settlers more rapidly than the northern half, aided by closer proximity to the settled areas of Illinois and Missouri, and being more easily reached by steamboats for longer periods in the year. To Burlington, therefore, went the distinction of being the first Iowa town to have a stage route operating on regular schedules.

¹³*Dubuque Visitor*, January 18, 1837.

¹⁴*Iowa News*, September 9, 1837.

1837—FIRST STAGE ROUTE

On November 1, 1837, a semi-weekly line of two-horse stages began running south from Burlington to St. Francisville, Missouri, where it connected with the larger and more important St. Louis-Galena route which traveled up the eastern side of the river, along the Illinois shore line. That the first Iowa line should extend south and should connect Iowa's largest southern town with the nearest available route touching at St. Louis was to be expected in view of the greater importance of the Ohio River—St. Louis emigrant water route. This was one of four stage-mail routes to Iowa towns advertised by the Post Office Department in the spring of 1837, and awarded in October. All the routes were nominally to begin on January 1, 1838, but due to certain qualifications in the St. Francisville contract, or perhaps convinced of a greater need, the Post Master General ordered operations on this route to begin at the earlier date indicated.¹⁵

Not a great deal is known of this first route. According to schedule it left Burlington on Sundays and Thursdays at 4 A. M., and passed through Gibson's Ferry, Fort Madison, Fort Des Moines, and Montrose before reaching St. Francisville at 10 the evening of the same day, covering the 45 miles in an elapsed time of 18 hours! Successfully standing off the competition of Dr. Addison Philleo, the horse-mail contractor, and that of Morton M. McCarver—one of the first three men to settle at Burlington—and Jonathan W. Parker, the winners of the contract, Richard Land and Samuel Hearn, were permitted to carry the mail three months on horseback. This may have had a reference to summer season, when the river steamers were able to carry all the on-coming emigrants, though frequently such arrangements referred to the winter season when the rush of western bound emigrants slackened.

Richard Land continued to operate stages for a number of years in southern Iowa, at least until 1842, when he was an unsuccessful competitor not only to retain this route, but on several others as well. Of Samuel Hearn even less is known, though it is recorded that "Doc" drove his own stages, at least

¹⁵25th Congress, 3d Sess., *Executive Docs.*, No. 254, p. 126, Serial Vol. 341; Letter from the Post Office Department to writer, dated December 9, 1938.

occasionally, over the Fort Madison run of this route.¹⁶

1838—STAGE MAILS INTRODUCED

In 1838 three other stage routes joined the one to St. Francisville to give Burlington four stage lines radiating north, east, west, and—to include the one established in November—a line south. Two of the lines begun in 1838 had the distinction of operating from terminus to terminus on Iowa soil. These, however, should be considered not as new routes so much as “extensions” out of Burlington, the territorial capitol.

From the point of view of Iowa alone, the most important of the three new routes was the Burlington to Davenport line. This schedule left Burlington on Sundays and Thursdays at 5 A. M. and made the eighty mile trip to Davenport by way of Jacksonville (Yellow Springs), Florence, Black Hawk (later Toolsborough), Wapello, Harrison, Grandview, Mouth of Pine, Bloomington, Muscatine, Geneva, Wyoming, Iowa (Montpelier), Clark's ferry (Glendale, later still, West Buffalo), Rockingham, at last pulling up in front of the store where D. C. Eldridge likewise held forth as postmaster, the stage delivered its mail and discharged its cramped load of passengers at 6 P. M.—on Mondays and Fridays, 37 hours after the stage had left Burlington! The trip was probably made without overnight stops, as the condition of the road was such that, as numerous complaints would testify, the stage would need all 37 hours on the road to make the distance within the required amount of time.¹⁷

The successful bidder for this stage-mail was Morton M. McCarver of Burlington. For some years past he had been a successful bidder on a number of government mail contracts in western Illinois in the vicinity of Burlington, holding mostly horse-mail contracts, though also a few stage lines. McCarver's successful bid was \$2500, five hundred under his nearest competitor, and just half that of Dr. Addison Philleo, the well known horse-mail contractor who had served Dubuque and other Iowa towns.

¹⁶27th Congress, 3d Sess., *Executive Docs.*, No. 180, pp. 231-45, Vol. 423; *Story of Lee County, Iowa*, N. C. Roberts and S. W. Moorhead, I, 129.

¹⁷25th Cong., *Exec. Docs.*, No. 254, pp. 125-6; Letter of the Post Office Department, *op. cit.*

The importance of this stage line lay not alone in the fact that it connected two Iowa towns and lay wholly within the borders of what is now Iowa, but, if you had inquired at any of the twelve post offices on the route, it was the facilities given to the numerous communities through which it passed; this stage meant that they in reality had a stage link with St. Louis and southern Illinois.

At the time it was established, the second new stage coach route—the line from Burlington to Macomb, Illinois, by way of Sho-ko-kon—was of equal, if not greater importance than the Burlington-Davenport route. Since Macomb was a center of several well equipped cross stage lines at this time, it was of considerable importance to Burlington to gain connections with it. Like the other stage lines already operating in Iowa, this was a semi-weekly two-horse stage route, and covered the forty miles between destination points in 13 hours. Leaving Burlington at the same early hour as did the Davenport stage, 5 o'clock, the eastern stage reached Macomb the same day at six, Sundays and Wednesdays. The holder of the former horse-mail contract between the two towns, Morton M. McCarver, was also the winner of the mail contract.¹⁸

This route was important because in conjunction with the St. Francisville route and the Davenport line, this route brought Burlington in touch with all three main routes of emigration to the west. The St. Francisville line tapped the Ohio River-St. Louis line, the Davenport connection linked Burlington with the Buffalo-Chicago lake route, and the Macomb stages made Burlington the eventual terminus of an overland emigrant route. To some extent, of course, these lines overlapped, but in 1838 this was negligible. All this sounds quite imposing, but when we recall that the Davenport route was but semi-weekly, and frequently failed to make schedules because of bad roads, rains, mud, and snow, and that the St. Francisville route was carried three months a year on horseback, the actual picture is seen in better perspective.

The third stage route to begin operating in 1838 is especially noteworthy because it was the first route serving exclusively

¹⁸*Exec. Docs.*, No. 254, pp. 99-100; letter of Post Office Dept.

Iowa towns to leave the Mississippi River behind and to strike inland. This route struck west from Burlington and followed a course through Hartford, New London, and Richland to stop at Mt. Pleasant, a distance of thirty miles. Our first reaction is that the interior areas back of Burlington could hardly support a stage, so one is not surprised to learn that it was served by the lowest standard of stage mail contract let in Iowa, the once-a-week two-horse stage. There was a surprise for the government, too, however. After the Post Office Department had advertised the western end of the route at Richland, twelve miles west of Burlington, they were informed by all the bidders for the contract that no post office existed there, consequently the route was extended eighteen miles to Mt. Pleasant. This mistake may explain the unusual and apparently unearned service to Mr. Pleasant. Samuel Newland won the contract at the almost impossibly low figure of \$120 per year. Whether he did not know the distance, or figured to use horses is uncertain, in any event, he failed to make good, for on June 15, 1838, the contract was transferred to William S. Viney, whose bid was almost two and a half times that of Newland, \$312. If an added inducement to western travelers was needed, it might be that according to schedule the stages did not leave the Burlington post office until seven in the morning, and arrived at Mt. Pleasant, therefore, at the seasonable hour of six the same evening.¹⁹

These three regularly scheduled stages in addition to the earlier one established in 1837, were all let on contracts filed by mid-summer, 1837, and awarded in October that fall. Since the Post Office Department had first to survey the needs of service before they could place their newspaper advertisements of the contracts to be let, a decision on what kinds of mail service were to be allowed for the next four and a half years was made some seven to nine months before service was to begin on January 1, 1838. This lapse in time was of vital importance on a frontier where ferry boats were busily engaged all day in carrying loaded wagons and land hungry emigrants across to Iowa, whose numbers could change the

¹⁹26th Cong., 1st Sess., *House Docs.*, No. 220, p. 154, Vol. 368; *Exec. Docs.*, No. 254, p. 127.

mail needs of the country rapidly. Although the department undoubtedly tried to guess with the tide of settlement, mistakes were inevitable, and the settlers were given just enough grounds for complaint to make a vigorous campaign of petitions and memorials to the department head and their delegate in Congress of some hopeful value.

All the regularly operating routes thus far had been in southern Iowa. The northern portions of the territory, without a single stage line, were unquestionably very earnest in their attempts to forge a stage coach link with the southern sections, and, of course, the only route really considered was the Dubuque to Davenport line. The constant agitation culminated at year's end in a temporary stage coach service being put over this route. Like the one in 1836, this too, owed its existence to the special demands of a legislative session which met in the late fall of that year at Burlington.

The citizens of Dubuque, however, did not wait for the legislature. Convinced of the utter righteousness of their demands for a stage connection east and south, early in 1838 they determined to give full voice to these demands, being probably helped to this decision by George Wallace Jones, Delegate in Congress from Wisconsin Territory. Believing that a new postal law would be enacted that year, Jones wrote his friends at Dubuque in January urging them to send petitions to both him and the Post Office Department favoring the routes and services wanted. Doubtless in response to this suggestion, a meeting was called for February 19, to be held at the Methodist Church at 7 o'clock. The meeting was held on Mouday as planned, with T. R. Lurton as chairman and John Plumbe, Jr., secretary. John Plumbe was the same man who in 1839 authored a plan for a transcontinental railway linking the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans, obviously a man interested in transportation problems. Perhaps he had the "whereases" and "therefors" already written and in his pocket when the meeting was called to order, at any rate Plumbe reported to the meeting the following resolutions which were unanimously adopted:

Resolved, That a Committee of three persons be appointed by the chair, to draft a petition to Congress, and circulate it amongst

our citizens for signature; praying for the establishment of the following post routes, viz:

1st. A tri-weekly four horse post coach route from Du Buque, W. T. to Milwaukee, W. T., upon the line of the territorial road.

2nd. A weekly horse route from Du Buque to the centre of Delaware Co. W. T., upon the line of the territorial road.

3rd. A weekly horse mail from Du Buque to the Cedar river settlement.

Resolved, that the committee be further instructed to draft a petition to the Hon. Amos Kendall, Postmaster General, respectfully praying him so to increase the transportation of the mails from Du Buque and Chicago, Ill., and between Du Buque and St. Louis, Mo. via the west side of the Mississippi river, as to afford us upon the former line a *daily*, and upon the latter a tri-weekly four horse post coach conveyance.

Resolved, That we earnestly solicit the co-operation of all our fellow citizens in the territory, and in Ill. interested in any of the foregoing contemplated improvements, by joining us in petitioning for such as they may be respectively affected by.

Mr. Lurton appointed Judge Lockwood, J. T. Fales, and John Plumbe, Jr., as the committee of three.

By the Chicago route the meeting plainly meant the Galena route, as in later years this was the route over which the Frink & Walker stages carried their Chicago passengers, and was the direction taken by the railroad later still.²⁰

With hopes raised high and expectant of success, Dubuque was little prepared for the disappointing news received a month later from Delegate Jones, that the Post Master General declined establishing any of the stage lines asked for, due to the expense involved. Little wonder the editor of the *Iowa News* was mad. It was bad enough to be refused, but when it was a widely known fact that the Post Office Department had a comfortable surplus to its credit at the end of 1837, the Post Master General's action was sure to be interpreted as prejudiced, to say the least. If a surplus existed in the postal department, to what better purpose could it be spent, Dubuque people reasoned, than to extend needed mail facilities to growing settlements on the outposts of the frontier? But Dubuque had to be content with a once-a-week horse-mail to Davenport and the lack of all stage connections for another year. The

²⁰*Iowa News*, February 3, 17, 24, 1838.

southern mail service unquestionably sorely tried the patience of the northern town as the delays and sometimes total absence of mails continued throughout the year.²¹

But if Dubuque dispaired of a southern stage connection to other Iowa towns, they reckoned without their friends in the territorial legislature of Iowa. Whether the first territorial legislature of Iowa, which assembled at Burlington on November 12, 1838, felt that their official dignity required that their latest actions be made known to the farthest corner of the territory at the quickest of possible speeds, or whether they felt that the extra burden of mails to Burlington occasioned by the convening of the legislature and the attendance at its sessions of those who found it to their interests to do so was such as to warrant increased mail facilities, or whether the closing of the river by the ice may have influenced their actions is problematical, for whichever reason, legitimate or otherwise, the solons in their infinite wisdom attempted to remedy Dubuque's lack of stage connections south. Because Burlington had stage service as far north as Davenport, it sufficed merely to provide connections between Dubuque and Davenport to offer the former town direct stage connections with the territorial capitol.

On December 3, 1838, Thomas Cox, from Jackson County, a to-be-benefited district, introduced in the House of Representatives a resolution which authorized the postmaster of Davenport to supply Dubuque with a semi-weekly two-horse stage mail service during the remainder of the session of the legislature. With typical generosity, the resolution also provided that the Post Master General be memorialized to pay the expense of the extra service rendered out of the federal department's funds. The resolution sailed through the House the same day it was introduced, and was promptly passed in the Council on the following day. In a week's time, on December 11, the special committee appointed to draft the memorial to the Post Master General was ready to report. On behalf of the committee Thomas Cox offered the following memorial for adoption:²²

²¹*Ibid.*, April 21, 1838.

²²*Journal of the House of Representatives of the First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Iowa*, 1839, pp. 61, 92; *Journal of the Council*, pp. 65-6.

To the Hon. Amos Kendall, Post Master General,

Whereas, the mail from Davenport to Du Buque, in the Territory of Iowa, is carried once a week on horseback, under the existing contract with the Post Master General,

And whereas, many of the letters, public documents, and newspapers, from members of the Territorial Assembly, now in session at Burlington, to their constituents in the northern district, cannot in this manner be conveyed in due time, but remain at the Davenport Post Office from week to week, to the great inconvenience of the people in the northern section of the Territory.

And whereas, in order to remedy this inconvenience, authority has been given by the said Territorial Assembly to the Post Master at Davenport, to carry the mail between that place and Du Buque twice a week, in two horse coaches, during the time the members of the said Assembly may be engaged in the discharge of their legislative duties.

Your memorialists, therefore, the Council and House of Representatives of the Territory of Iowa, most respectfully request that this arrangement may be sanctioned by the department, and that the extra expenses which may be incurred in conveying the mail between Davenport and Du Buque, in the manner and for the period herein before mentioned, may be paid out of the funds of the General Post Office.

This bit of legislative interference with the functions of the federal government received the endorsement of the House on the 12th, and of the upper house on the 13th. From the subsequent record of this incident it appears that stages began the northern run after the Christmas recess of the legislators.²³

Amos Kendall apparently did not heed the prayers of the legislative memorialists, for D. C. Eldridge was still unpaid when Isaac Leffler presented the postmaster's claim to the House a year later, on the twentieth of December, 1839. As embodied in form of H. R. File 115, and directed to W. W. Chapman, Delegate in Congress, it was stated:²⁴

That the said Eldridge, in conformity to the said resolution [of December 4, 1838] contracted with A. C. Donaldson esq of Davenport to carry the mail between the said points according to the provisions of the said resolution. The said Donaldson was to receive for such services the sum of thirty dollars per trip, and that the said Donaldson performed in pursuance of such contract nine extra trips

²³*Journal of the House of Representatives of the First Legislative Assembly*, pp. 120, 150; *Journal of the Council, First Legislative Assembly*, p. 88.

²⁴Public Archives of the State of Iowa, S-IX, 11, 12, State Dept. of History and Archives, Des Moines.

during the sitting of the Legislative Assembly in the year 1838-39.

Your memorialists therefore request that your honorable bodies will appropriate the sum of \$270.00 to remunerate the said Donaldson for the services aforesaid, believing that he is justly entitled to such compensation.

It will be noted that the postal department is again asked to pay for the services inaugurated at the direction of the territorial legislature.

Interesting to the student of government is the fate of the claim in the Council. Received from the House on January 2, Council File No. 18 was substituted for the House bill on January 11, and provided for quite a different financial settlement. Either the Council feared that Donaldson would never get his pay from the Post Office Department, or else they recognized that the legislature may have overstepped its bounds, and that in reality they had no more than hired a special legislative messenger at expensive stage rates. In any event the substitute measure, C. F. 18, provided that Donaldson be paid out of the proverbially impoverished territorial treasury instead of from the federal funds. The substitute bill passed the Council on the 11th and the House on the 13th. While there is no record of actual payment being made, it is presumed that in due time Donaldson received his \$270 from the territorial treasury.²⁵

The withdrawal of the semi-weekly stages from the Davenport-Dubuque route after the adjournment of the legislature throws a revealing shaft of light upon the readiness of Iowa for a more extensive stage coach service. When such a moderate service could not be supported by the second and third largest towns in the territory, it is safe to assume the other communities could expect less.

1838, therefore, ended with but four regularly operating stages and one temporary one. Very probably there were other periodic occasional "stages" between various points in the territory than the Donaldson line mentioned. One of these stages quite likely was to be seen operating from time to time between Dubuque and Galena. Most of such temporary services in 1838, however, and for several years to come, were not

²⁵*Ibid.*; *Council Journal of First Territorial Assembly*, pp. 116, 148.

stages as often as the springless wagons of the pioneer farmer or settler, used on special occasions. An example of what may have been the type of this "extra" service might be Ebenezer Cook, who toward the close of the first Iowa territorial legislature wrote from Rockingham to his good friend in the House of Representatives, Laurel Summers:²⁶

I design coming down previous to the adjournment and probably about that time—Should I come down with a team Could I probably get a load of passengers back?

Although other instances might be cited to indicate an occasional stage or wagon serving towns as yet denied regular staging, it should be noted that those who might have ridden with Ebenezer Cook could also have taken the regular Burlington-Davenport stage.

Small as these beginnings in 1838 may seem, it was three years before a like number of new stage lines began operation in one year. This long interval of slow growth was conditioned by two forces, one the slower rate of population growth in Iowa than is generally held by romanticists of frontier history, and secondly, by the fact that these first stage lines in Iowa were dependent for their existence upon a United States mail contract. Some argument could be produced showing that the second force acted detrimentally to the first.

And it may be argued that both population and stage coach lines stood thwarted by the Mississippi River, and what was equally important, the difficulty of getting inland. Though water highways are of tremendous importance in the development of pioneer communities, they may also be serious barriers. In one direction, north and south, the Mississippi River was a splendid boon to the settlement of Iowa, but in an east and west direction, it offered an obstacle to easy infiltration of emigrants which loomed larger and larger as the years went by and the development of land systems of communication made the northern and overland routes of western migration of increasing importance. Not until the spanning of the Mississippi by foot bridges in the last half of the century was this barrier successfully overcome. But more than that, at least some settlers had to stake claims in the interior before the

²⁶*Laurel Summers Mss.*, State Dept. of History and Archives, Des Moines.

stages could afford to offer their coach service. Despite the boastings of town site proprietors, one of the greatest obstacles to this inland settlement was the lack of adequate water systems which favored inland travel. These Iowa did not have: contrast the effect of the Ohio River flowing westward into the unsettled and unknown trans-mountainous west with the Iowa rivers, which all, without exception, flowed *from* or *away* from the unsettled interior *to* the more settled areas. Add to this the fact that, the claims of most pioneers to the contrary, these rivers were hardly navigable, even up stream. Thus the settlement of Iowa depended upon efficient facilities for land travel as much as it did upon her water highways, and for the interior areas, Iowa was almost entirely dependent upon land systems. In the 1830's and 40's this meant stage coach accommodations, and at the close of 1838 Iowa could claim no more than a beggarly 191 miles of stage coach lines!

The territory of Iowa was as yet too young to boast of a commerce, an industry, or even an agriculture on anything like a parity with the areas to the east. Naturally, therefore, this youthful country could not boast of an extensive system of public conveyances. In 1838, as for several years, Iowa's efforts were directed towards a *system* of any sort. In these first years as a territory its means of transportation were not much beyond the sturdy ox carts in whose lumbering forms had come the great proportion of Iowa's first citizens. There were, in all probability, a few laden conestogas which had made their burdened overland trip across southern Indiana, Illinois, and sought to sell the contents of loaded barrels and crated boxes at Burlington or other river towns. It is doubtful, however, if the conestoga appeared much in Iowa before the California exodus in the late forties and early fifties. This type of transport was extremely expensive, even in the east where roads were much better and where markets were more certain.²⁷ The use of this peculiarly American vehicle as a family transport was rare at this time.

A country that saw mostly heavy ox carts and springless wagons could hardly support the expense of such advanced modes of travel as the swift rolling leather-spring Concord,

²⁷Hulbert, *Old National Road*, pp. 86-7fn; Dunbar, *History of Travel*, p. 752-3.

the cost of the horses, the way stations, the repair shops, and the pay rolls necessary to maintain efficient staging service. But the men who settled Iowa were ambitious, and although this territory could not yet support a private enterprise of transport, the settlers firmly believed that if given the extra boost of a United States mail contract they could. This was their hope.

Depending upon the mail contract, or the rare award of extra service by the Post Master General in between the regular four year periods at which the general mail contracts were let, it is little to be wondered that the years between 1838 and 1842 were lean ones for the lurching stages and their hardy, thirsty drivers.

It would be a mistake to believe, however, that during this interval of time, the staging interests in Iowa did not advance. While the development of staging lines in Iowa marked time, its eventual success was being guaranteed by the extension, consolidation, and perfection of stage coach operation in Illinois, Missouri, and Wisconsin. During this period of time more and more stage routes were crossing the level prairies of Illinois and establishing terminals on the eastern banks of the Mississippi. At Prairie du Chien, at New Boston, at Oquawka, at Stephenson, and numerous other places, stage connections with the ever growing settlements eastward were presaging the future profit and glory of stage business in Iowa. In Wisconsin, where staging did not begin until almost the same time as it appeared in Iowa, similar developments were taking place, and on our southern border the state of Missouri likewise witnessed a kindred perfection of organization and operation.

While Iowa waited as patiently as it might during these years, signs were not lacking of her probable expansion. One of these signs was the gradual elimination of the old time horse-mail contractors who were making unsuccessful attempts to compete with the recent advent of the stage proprietor. In the 1838 Post Office Department lettings, Dr. Addison Philleo won only one out of thirty horse and stage contracts upon which he submitted bids, and even this one was a pyrrhic victory, for the service was not put into operation. Then too,

there was Morton M. McCarver. Despite his two Iowa stage contracts, McCarver won only one bid more while losing fifteen others of assorted stage and horse service. He was one of eight contractors whose several horse-mail contracts were not renewed in the new Illinois awards of 1838, because, the Post Master General reported, they were being "covered by new service." Certainly, success is not built on stones like these. Since these contracts largely centered around Chicago and linking routes, it is probable that the new service meant the staging contracts awarded in that year to the increasingly powerful John Frink. This may have been the beginning of the end for McCarver, for in 1840 his Burlington-Macomb contract was transferred to William H. Holcomb, and a year later his Burlington-Davenport stage contract likewise went to the same man. As is well known, McCarver later sought his fortunes in Oregon in the later forties.²⁸

1839—SLOW GROWTH

Much as they aided her, Iowa did not have to depend entirely upon her sister states to write her staging record in 1839. In that year Iowa added two more stage lines to the four already established. At the close of 1839 these six lines could boast of 310 route miles. The two new routes gave Dubuque her long sought stage connection with Galena, from whence had come the first stage to Iowa some three years earlier, and the second joined Peoria and Burlington. Both of these routes, it will be noted, tapped well traveled emigrant routes to the west, the northern Great Lakes-Chicago route, and the less frequently traveled overland route across Indiana and Illinois.

1839 added a fifth stage route to the four already having terminals in Burlington. Although its Burlington-Macomb route tapped the overland trade in part, the Burlington-Peoria route, begun on July 1, 1839, served this route more directly. The route originally was awarded to William H. Holcomb on a once-a-week service to Burlington from Peoria by way of Middle Grove, St. Augustine, Ellison's Grove, then Burlington. It was shortly made a twice-a-week route, and by the time the Iowa territorial legislature was in session, they had

²⁸*House Docs.*, 26th Cong., No. 220; *Exec. Docs.* 254, p. 180; Letter from the Post Office Dept., dated Dec. 9, 1938.

taken it in hand so that a tri-weekly service by four-horse post coaches was obtained in a direct service between Peoria and Burlington.²⁹

Six months before the Burlington-Peoria stages began operating, George Ord. Karrick began a tri-weekly four-horse stage service carrying United States mails between Dubuque and Galena by way of Sinsinawa Mounds. This fifteen mile route Karrick was required to cover in four hours, leaving the Dubuque post office at one in the afternoon. For this service Karrick was paid \$800 by the government.³⁰

Because Karrick was the proprietor of a stage route between Prairie du Chien and Galena, which began operations July 1, 1838, a route which must surely have followed the river banks most of the way, and since Karrick received the government contract for the Dubuque route in the 'off' year of 1839, it is quite probable that during the last half of 1838 at frequent, if at unpredictable intervals, stages appeared at Dubuque with loads of passengers from Galena. This is confirmed by the fact that the initial service asked for was a tri-weekly one, whereas the customary service first granted was semi-weekly.

The regular schedules of the Galena stage gave Dubuque and Iowa in reality a third route, for by linking Dubuque with Galena the former city at long last gained staging connections with St. Louis, an outlet long desired by northern Iowa, especially since the stage gave them a service after the ice closed the river during the winter months.

Satisfied as they must have been to gain this southern outlet, their pleasure was considerably lessened by the fact that it was by the much longer route along the eastern shore of the Mississippi, and that they, Dubuque, were still without a stage connection with a southern Iowa town, a connection which

²⁹That the Iowa legislators found it exceedingly difficult not to administer Amos Kendall's Post Office Department for him is again made evident from the confession of the Leffler memorial informing the Post Master General what had been done: ". . . the territorial officers and citizens of Burlington believing that the Post Master General would sanction the change after [sic] understanding the great advantage it would confer . . . prevailed upon the contractor to combine this route, with route No. 2788 . . ."

Leffler was anxious lest the other post offices shut out by the legislated service would complain, and cause Burlington to lose this service of a tri-weekly stage. *Journal of the House of Representatives*, 2d territorial assembly, pp. 263-4.

³⁰26th Congress, *House Docs.*, No. 85, p. 307 vol. 384; *House*, 26th Congr., No. 220, p. 428.

would, in the case of Davenport, immediately establish the last remaining link in a St. Louis route on the western bank.

While obvious that Dubuque should favor a St. Louis stage via Davenport, that city also adopted the proposal in 1839 and urged such a service. To Davenport it would give a more direct connection with Dubuque than she now had by way of Stephenson and Galena, and would put her on what promised to be an important cross-roads of stage coach routes. In addition, Davenport began to urge the route because Dubuque was by this time trying to establish a stage route anywhere she could get it, just so long as it took her southward on the western bank; business men of Davenport for commercial reasons as well as for civic pride sought to thwart these tentative proposals Dubuque was making by establishing the route through Davenport, instead of Iowa City, for instance, or Burlington.³¹

Either for reasons of civic pride or for more altruistic motives, Davenport appeared the more aggressive supporter of the proposed service in 1839. On December 18, the editor of the *Iowa Sun and Davenport and Rock Island News* announced a meeting to be held at the Davenport Hotel on the following Saturday, "to co-operate with our Illinois friends on the suggestion of a mail coach route from St. Louis via this place to Du Buque." Davenport's counter proposal to Dubuque's philanderings was a St. Louis route to pass through "Lower Alton, Carrolton, Jacksonville, Beardstown, Rushville, Macomb, Monmouth, Stephenson," on the east side of the river, then to cross over to complete the route on the west side by way of "Davenport, Quinn's ferry on the Wabsepinacon, Richfield on the Maekoketa, to Dubuque, making the distance something less than 3000 miles."

The call for the meeting, however, either fell on deaf ears or else went unheeded in the Christmas season distractions, for on Christmas day the editor of the same Davenport paper lamented that scarcely a half dozen had attended the meeting. Undaunted, the editor issued a call for a second meeting to be held on January 14, 1840. Whether the second meeting was

³¹*Iowa Sun and Davenport and Rock Island News*, Dec. 25, 1839.

better attended than the first is uncertain, but it was no more successful in gaining the service sought.

This same Dubuque-Davenport stage route once again received the attention of the legislature in 1839, but with somewhat different attack made upon it than in 1838. This time merely a memorial was sent to W. W. Chapman, Delegate in Congress from the territory of Iowa, urging him to use all efforts to obtain a semi-weekly two-horse service on the route in question. From this memorial it is evident that the legislature did not attempt to repeat the 1838 performance and "authorize" the establishment of a stage between the two cities by legislative fiat. Undoubtedly the unpaid claim of Alexander C. Donaldson had a sobering effect upon any ideas of venturing a second time on that path.³²

But even with the aid of a legislative memorial and the Delegate in Congress, the agitation for stage mail service between Dubuque and Davenport had until 1842 to wait.

1840—STAGE EXPANSION HALTED

Among other tokens of a brightening future for stage coaches in Iowa was the beginning of an agitation by towns and villages for an even closer tie with the eastern cities. The Davenport editor who had urged the Dubuque-St. Louis route also advocated a Chicago-Stephenson-Davenport-Iowa City line. In prospect too appeared a Peoria-Davenport route at some not too distant day, as Peoria tried to lure Davenport from its preoccupation with the St. Louis route with such a proposal, which, of course, Davenport rejected. Soundings too were taken in Bloomington for a Chicago-Iowa City stage line to pass through that town. All of these tokens, however, were but intimations of the future, a future that was not to be fulfilled in 1840.³³

1840, so far as this writer has been able to discover, was the most barren of any of the first five years of staging in Iowa. No new permanent stage route operating on regular schedules to Iowa towns appears to have begun this year. The suggestion that a tri-weekly two-horse hack began a rumbling jolting

³²*Journal of the House of Representatives*, 2d territorial assembly, pp. 138, 148, 153, 261; *Journal of the Council*, 2d assembly, pp. 111, 125.

³³*Iowa Sun*, *op. cit.*

schedule between Iowa City and Bloomington in 1840^{33a} must be rejected on the evidence of the editor of the *Bloomington Herald*, who complained in his issue of November 6, that Iowa City

has only a weekly mail from this place under contract for service on horse back, while the proceeds of the Post Office amount to about \$800 per annum.

The business of that office well warrants an increase of service at least equal to a two-horse coach twice-a-week, and we hope the people of Johnson will take immediate steps to obtain more efficient service on this route, and that promptly.

The real contribution of 1840 lay in the rising chorus from a widening group of towns for the institution of stage coach service. And since this hope was usually vain unless the government lent its aid in the form of a stage mail contract, we find most evidence of this chorus of demands in petitions to the government. The southern part of the state took the lead in this, as might be expected, since it was filling up more rapidly with settlers and mail service needs were more readily apparent to them.

In the legislature which met at Burlington in November, Council File No. 3, which passed the lower House on November 11, urged A. C. Dodge, the new Delegate in Congress from Iowa, to "use his influence to have a line of semi-weekly post coaches put on the mail route from Fort Madison in Lee County to Bentons Port in Van Buren." Another evidence of the growing population centering in southern counties, and their complaints for mail service is another Council File, No. 7, which rehearsed these grievances, complaining that due to the

existence of a multiplicity of Special Routes and Special Contracts within said County . . . under the present state of things the mail in being transmitted from Farmington to Iowa Ville a distance of about thirty miles passes through the hands of three different contractors, and is in consequence of the delay at the end of each contract from three to five days in going from one point to the other.

^{33a}C. R. Aurner in *Leading Events in Johnson County Iowa History* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1912), p. 205, states that Frink & Walker began a tri-weekly stage service in 1840. Benj. F. Shambaugh in his *Old Capitol Remembers* (Iowa City, Iowa, 1939), p. 216, repeats the story. The accuracy is to be doubted in view of the fact that Iowa City was not yet the seat of the legislative sessions, that Frink & Walker are nowhere mentioned in connection with this route in the Post Office Department's records, and the *Bloomington* newspapers make no mention of the firm in these years. See also *Bloomington Herald*, May 28, 1841.

The resolution urged that the three separate contracts be joined in one continuous route, and that a special route be established from St. Francisville to Bentonsport, in addition to a route from Fort Madison to the same village. Though not explicitly stated, doubtless the petitioners had stage coach service in mind on the last two routes.³⁴

Suggestive of some of the conditions faced by travelers over even the more heavily traveled routes is the complaint of the legislature again that on the Burlington to Davenport stage road³⁵

the mail as well as travel on said road is frequently interrupted and at times the mail is stopped entirely for several days together for the want of bridges on some of the streams over which it passes.

The absence of new stage lines beginning in 1840 is largely explained by the fact that it was still two years before the U. S. mail contracts were again to be let for the northwestern section, in which Iowa was classed. That, plus the beginning of a customary deficiency in the Post Office Department's operating budget, made special awards of contracts rare, and spelled, therefore, stage limitations in Iowa.

In addition to these reasons, the barren record may have been due in part to the fact that in 1840 Iowa was adjusting herself to a change from a river colony to an inland territory, taking the westward step of opening its next legislature in the new capitol city on the western edge of settlement, near the Indian border line. The *Bloomington Herald* estimated that there were 1500 settlers living in Johnson County in November, 1840, and that of these, seven hundred lived in Iowa City. Seven hundred people situated in a thinly populated country is hardly an inducement to bring stage coaches to a town. But Iowa City had more than seven hundred inhabitants to offer—she was the capitol of the territory, and as such claimed an importance far out of proportion to her numbers. Prompt and regular communications with the capitol were everywhere a matter of general concern. It may be said, therefore, that the suggestions made in Davenport and Bloomington for a Chicago-Iowa City route had not the Chi-

³⁴Public Archives of the State of Iowa, S-IX, 16, 17.

³⁵*Ibid.*; passed the House on November 24, 1840.

cago connection in mind so much as the other half, the suggestion being an attempt to guide to their city the stage routes which must sooner or later link the capitol to the east.³⁶

The fulfillment of these petitions and dreams lay in the future, for throughout 1840 Iowa City was without regularly operating stage service, and for that matter lacking in mail service of almost any description.

Doubtless the year ended with much the same kind of news as with which it began, that George Karriek's stage had broken through the ice in crossing the Mississippi early in February. His two horses were nearly drowned, and the eastern mail all but lost.³⁷

1841—FAVORABLE SIGNS

1841 was less than three months old before the seventh stage line serving an Iowa town was put in operation. By direction of the Post Master General, on March 24, the Illinois mail stages which for the past 20 months had been stopping at Carthage, Illinois, began a semi-weekly service to Fort Madison. This line began at Rushville, Illinois, and reached the Iowa town by way of Farmersville, Camden, Huntsville, Pulaski, Augusta, Plymouth, St. Mary's, DeKalb, then Carthage, Appanoos, Commerce (now Nauvoo), and finally Fort Madison. As frequently happens, many of these villages, then important, are but small communities now. Abraham Tolles, the proprietor of the original route, and who served Fort Madison on the extended line, held also several other stage contracts centering in Rushville.³⁸

The second regular stage line to begin in 1841 started operating six months later, and like the one above, it too, owed its establishment to an order of the Post Master General. Beginning at New Boston, Illinois, the route reached its western end at Harrison, Iowa, by the way of Toolsborough and Wapello. The fifteen mile run was let to William L. Toole, an active member of the early Iowa territorial legislatures; Toole began putting a semi-weekly two-horse stage over the route on September 30, 1841. This route offered good connections to the patrons along the Iowa route, for by transferring at New

³⁶*Bloomington Herald*, November 6, 1840.

³⁷*Iowa News*, February 22, 1840.

³⁸Letter from the Post Office Dept., Dec. 9, 1938; *House Docs.*, No. 254.

Boston to the stages of George Miers, they could reach Monmouth, Illinois, from whence it was an easy matter to join any of the great eastern stage lines.³⁹

Both of these contracts were for short terms, running only until the next general mail contracts for the northwest section—which included Iowa—were let in 1842.

Just when the third route begun in this year first ran its stages over the road between Bloomington and Iowa City is uncertain. Perhaps like three other stages lines which began in the late fall of 1841, it too placed stages on the route to coincide with the increase of business attendant upon the opening of the Fifth Territorial Assembly of Iowa in Iowa City on December 6—the first assembly to sit in the new capitol city. This conclusion is suggested by the first notice of this line in the *Bloomington Herald* of December 24, in which John Russell states that

The contractor, in order to keep up with the increase of business, has at his own expense, carried the mail in two horse carriages, for which he is sure of no additional compensation. This improvement has been made necessary because of the heavy mails to and from that city, and it is inadequate, the mail making almost a full load for the team.

While the other stage routes generally withdrew following the adjournment of the legislature, this one was able to find sufficient patronage to continue stage service on the same twice-a-week basis even with the lawmakers gone. Doubtless the influx of immigration in the spring months was stimulating to business, as the *Bloomington Herald* notes on May 27, 1842, that

It is no unusual occurrence to see two or three hacks loaded with passengers for that city, [Iowa City], notwithstanding the stage runs through twice-a-week.

These extra hacks probably came from either William St. John's livery stables, or from Parvin's Hotel, both of which boasted that they were equipped to offer such services "anywhere in the territory."

With respect to the stage record for the remainder of the year, a question arises whether all three of the other stage

³⁹27th Congr., 3d Sess., *House Docs.*, No. 180, p. 627, Vol. 423.

routes which began operations during the late fall were temporary, or whether one of these was the beginning of a permanent service. Two were definitely temporary, clearly owing their origin and continuance to the fact that the fourth territorial legislature was to convene in Iowa City in November of that year. Their hope was to profit from the extra coming and going of personages attending the sessions of the legislature, and from the extra official correspondence, wants, and demands of the legislative body itself. The third stage line probably began with the same confident assurances of profit, and a hope that it would meet with a patronage sufficient to warrant a longer life. As much could be said for the proprietors of the other two routes.

The existence of these routes was in part due to the fact that when the legislators met in Iowa City in 1841 they found themselves no better served with mails than was the town in 1840. It had to face the same problem that had confronted the first legislature in Burlington in 1838: how to secure adequate transportation and mail communications with the other towns in the territory, a connection of special importance during the law making and amending activities of the legislature. The first legislature meeting at Burlington in 1838 was much better off than its 1841 successor, for the then capitol of the territory was served by four stage routes, from the north, east, south, and west. The 1841 legislature meeting in Iowa City, on the other hand, was without a single solitary stage line on a regular schedule! That this situation was met in 1841 by private initiative and not by legislative decree, as in 1838, is the best single indication we have of the growing maturity of the territory, and that the day would soon arrive when staging would cease to be a risky gamble, and become a well ordered profitable enterprise.

Naturally the most important lines of communication for the capitol would be to the older river towns, and logically enough, the former capitol town of Burlington established the first of these short term stage lines. The *Iowa City Standard* announced in its columns of November 12, 1841,

A line of stages to be run regularly, twice a week, between Iowa City and Burlington, has been started by Mr. Downing of the latter

place. The want of communication to this place from different parts has been severely felt, and hope the undertaking will prove successful.⁴⁰

Especially significant is the next sentence:

Application should be made to the proper source for establishing a mail route from this place direct to Burlington.

Not to be outdone by Burlington, Davenport also quickly established a stage connection with the new capitol:⁴¹

Mr. Robert Gower, an enterprising citizen of Washington Ferry, Cedar County, came to this city, on Thursday evening last [November 18,] with a two-horse stage, containing the mail from Davenport, Rock Island, &c. Mr. Gower has issued proposals for carrying the mail, by private subscription, from Davenport to this city, touching at Rochester, and all the intermediate Post Offices, for thirteen weeks (during the session of the Legislature,) provided he can receive sufficient encouragement. We have but little doubt, that, if Mr. Gower receives a compensation adequate to the importance of the object, he will be more than able to prosecute this laudable undertaking. . . .

This thirteen weeks service was presumably in stages, and was apparently successfully performed.

Aside from the announcement of stage service, the notice above is specially interesting because of the reference to carrying mail by private subscription. From this we may conclude that Iowa City and Davenport were without even a horseback mail service, the same as Burlington and the new capitol, for Gower would hardly have publicly flouted the 1825 postal laws, still in force, which forbade the transport of mail for private profit between centers served by a government contract for mail service. Iowa City was obviously isolated so far as mail service was concerned, no mail route existing to Dubuque either. This condition is specially noteworthy because in 1841 the capitol city was fully two years old.

It is not probable that either of these lines remained in operation after the legislature adjourned in January. Significantly neither of these routes were advertised for stage mail service by the Post Office Department in 1842. If a stage had continued in operation on either route, transportation of

⁴⁰ A week later the editor enthusiastically claimed a tri-weekly service. This probably was a mistake. He did rejoice with good reason, however, that the stages operated without "any of Uncle Samuel's purse."

⁴¹ *Iowa City Standard*, November 19, 1841.

the mails by stage would surely have been provided for, since the department's custom was to let the contract to the fastest service in operation between given communities.

The third route, however, unlike the others, did not directly connect the new capitol city with one of the larger towns on the river, but sought to close a yawning gap in Iowa's staging service by putting a line on the route between Davenport and Dubuque. Stages were in operation over this route at least by the 27th of November, when John Grace advertised that, having procured good carriages, he was prepared to carry passengers from Davenport to Dubuque once a week, leaving Davenport on Mondays, and Dubuque on Thursdays. Since his stages did not reach either Dubuque or Davenport until the second day after departure, his schedule may have provided for an overnight stop. On the other hand, and this is more likely, if the conditions of the roads reduced the speed to two to three miles an hour, then it simply meant a weary night journey over rutted roads in an uncomfortable two-horse vehicle, not without reason called a "jerky."

Traveling farther inland than the route taken by the horse-mails, the Grace stages were advertised to pass

through one of the very best and finest agricultural regions of Iowa, offering great inducements to the enterprising farmer—passing through Vandenburg, Clinton county seat and Adrew [sic] the county seat[sic] of Jackson county, thence to Dubuque, a distance of 75 miles.

From the fact that the advertisement appeared in the *Iowa Sun* on March 5, 1842, several weeks after the legislature adjourned, and from the tone of the ad, offering special notice to emigrants, John Grace quite likely intended to continue his line as a permanent service. While there is no proof that he did so, some credence is given this belief by the fact that in the mail contracts awarded in 1842, Grace was listed as an unsuccessful competitor for the Davenport-Dubuque route. If Grace did continue his stages after the adjournment of the legislature, even if only up to the first of July when the government contract began, he then deserves special mention as the first stage coach proprietor in Iowa who operated on a regular permanent schedule without the subsidy of a mail bag

under the driver's seat or tied in the boot at the rear. With the loss of the bid for the mail contract, it is quite certain that Grace retired his line of stages from the route, for it was impossible at this time to compete against a rival who could boast of carrying the United States Mail.⁴²

Other signs than these that the "climate of opinion" for this type of service was growing were not lacking. A particularly interesting bit of evidence of this spread of staging "climate" is to be found in the resolution introduced in the House of Representatives by Asbury Porter, of Henry County, on December 7, 1841. The resolution asked that the postmaster of Iowa City be authorized to employ someone to carry a weekly mail from Iowa City to Keosauqua, via Washington, Trenton, Mt. Pleasant, and Salem, also a weekly mail from Iowa City to Dubuque, on the national road. The Post Master General, in keeping with human nature, was to be memorialized to pay for the extra service. What makes this attempt to repeat the experiment of 1838 worthy of notice is that while the original of the Porter resolution asked only for a horseback mail service, the clerk who prepared the minutes of the House Journal recorded the action taken on the resolution later that same day, December 7, as follows:

A motion was made by Mr. Briggs to take from the table the resolution authorizing the Post Master of this city to establish a weekly line of stages leading from this place to Keosauqua, &c.

Nothing in the journal or in the records of that session remaining in the public archives could have given the clerk cause to misinterpret the wording or the intent of the resolution. Although a psychologist might construct a whole series of causal relationships, it will suffice merely to record it.⁴³

Because the legislature was frequently petitioned by citizens of various districts for various types of mail services needed, the annals of the legislature offer fine supplementary infor-

⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 235.

⁴³*Journal of the House of Representatives*, 4th territorial legislature, pp. 7, 9, 18, 20-5, 27, 29; Public Archives of Iowa, S-IX, 21, 22, 23.

An interesting sequel to this third attempt to help the Post Master General maintain the service of the mails was that after the Porter resolution was passed by both houses in form of a joint resolution, Governor John Chambers vetoed it (H. R. File No. 2) on grounds that it asked the postmaster to perform a duty which he had no authority to execute. In other words, Gov. Chambers told the legislature that they were trespassing upon the domain of the federal government. The veto was sustained.

mation with respect to the spread of staging in Iowa. The 1841 legislature should have been particularly informative, since it was the first time an Iowa legislature was in session prior to the next big letting of mail contracts in the north-western section. Petitions for mail services, therefore, assumed extra significance. Perhaps that is why the debates over the numerous proposals were unusually prolonged and apparently bitter, and why much of the record appears susceptible to a pork barrel interpretation—it was at last becoming profitable to debate such items.

Each house established special committees to frame joint resolutions to be sent Congress, petitioning for “an appropriation to improve roads and Mail routes in this territory,” and to gather information “relative to establishing new mail routes,” vacating some, and “increasing [the] facilities of others.”⁴⁴

No reference to stage coach service appears in the House report, H. R. File No. 39, although twenty-two different routes were mentioned as in want of either added or original service. In the Council, however, four different stage routes were proposed for consideration. Two of these were subsequently adopted. S. C. Hastings of Bloomington was responsible for two suggestions, asking the special committee to study the “expediency” of establishing a semi-weekly four-horse post coach service between Millersburgh, Illinois, and Bloomington, and a weekly four-horse post coach service from Bloomington to Iowa City. In addition, Hastings asked the committee to consider a route from Bloomington by way of Moscow and Rochester to Tipton, Iowa. His first suggestion was adopted, but the second route, to Tipton, was rejected. The Council did, however, incorporate into the bill another proposal to establish a two-horse stage mail between Bentonsport and Fort Madison. But after first adopting the fourth stage resolution, to strike the word “weekly” from a description of the route between Burlington and Keosauqua and to insert “semi-weekly post coach route,” the Council apparently turned it down, for it does not appear on the bill preserved

⁴⁴*Journal of the House of Rep.*, 4th territorial legislature, pp. 54, 93, 103.

in the public archives of that session of the legislature.⁴⁵

But after all the debating and jockeying for position involved in the six weeks study of this proposition in the Council, these efforts for a stage service went for naught. By the time the Council was prepared for final action on the Council File, No. 30, the House had finished with H. R. 39. When the latter was received in the Council, the Council File was immediately killed by indefinite postponement and H. R. 39 taken up for consideration. And as has been indicated, the preserved copy of H. R. 39 nowhere mentions the staging services asked for in the Council bill. Perhaps their failure to be included may in part account for the failure of successive committees from the two houses to reach an agreement over conflicting amendments. The bill died a languishing death at the hands of obstinately disagreeing legislators.⁴⁶

The significance of these lost stage resolutions lies in that if there was a universally recognized need for stage mail service between the points included in the Council File, little objection would have been made to their inclusion in the House bill. More important is the fact that so few proposals were made in this session, an omission particularly important because the petitions would reach the Post Office Department before the advertisements for the 1842 mail services were made up. Consequently, despite the growing evidence of the need of this "modern" type of service, the need for stage coaches could not have been imperative; the suspicion is held that their need was still more emotional than physical.

The lack of a population to warrant the demand for higher service was still the main obstacle. The more alert leaders in Iowa in 1841-42 were well aware of the lack of adequate means to carry travelers and emigrants into the interior regions of Iowa. That the Mississippi was considered even by them to be one of their greatest handicaps to settlement is implied in the memorial to Congress introduced by James Robertson in 1842.⁴⁷

⁴⁵*Journal of the Council*, *ibid.*, pp. 42, 62; Public Archives, *op. cit.*; *Bloomington Herald*, Nov. 12, 1841. The Millersburgh route was designed to give Bloomington a stage connection with Peoria.

⁴⁶*Journal of the House of Rep.*, 4th territorial assembly, pp. 156, 161, 166-7, 180, 278; *Journal of the Council*, pp. 33, 36, 44, 56, 62-3, 71, 80, 110, 115; Public Archives, *op. cit.*

⁴⁷Public Archives, *op. cit.*

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States in Congress assembled

Your Memorialists the Council and House of Representatives of the Territory of Iowa Respectfully sheweth

That there is a great want of mail facilities for the Territory of Iowa—Notorisly [sic] are some important districts comparatively destitute, but the Country at large suffers for the want of leading routes—more particularly those which should bring into the Territory as directly as possible the great mails from the East—The distance between Burlington and Dubuque (both in Iowa) is estimated to be by the river about two hundred miles and for the whole of that distance there is no regular mail route crossing the Mississippi River. The delay attendant upon the transmission of their most important mails to the people residing on the west side of the Mississippi is a source of much vexation and in convenience.

The memorialists very probably were thinking in terms of stage coach routes when they came to suggested remedies:

To remedy this state of things in part Your Memorialists would respectfully ask the establishment of the following described mail route—viz- To leave the great mail route from Chicago to Galena at Dixon, Ills., thence running down the south side of Rock River by the Rapids, Prophets Town, Portland, and Brandenburg to the mouth of the Rock River, crossing the Mississippi at Rockingham (Iowa) thence by Hickory Grove, Tipton and Washington Ferry to Iowa City- This route besides accomplishing the end of crossing the Mississippi nearly midway between Burlington and Dubuque would on both sides of the River accommodate . . . densely populated districts. . . .

This resolution too appears to have died in the House.

The year should be ended with the notation of a five dollar fine being imposed upon George Karrick for a delay in his Dubuque-Galena mail, and the news of the more serious loss of the mail bags when the stage crashed through the ice in crossing the Iowa River between Bloomington and Burlington, an accident in which the two horses were drowned. Such news, though still rare in 1841, were soon to become headaches to stage proprietors and public patrons alike.⁴⁸

1842—HOPE AND DISAPPOINTMENT

Though there was a notable increase in staging in 1842, it was concentrated largely in those communities where it had

⁴⁸26th Congr., 1st Sess., *House Doc.*, No. 84, p. 40, vol. 384; *Bloomington Herald*, Feb. 26, 1841.

been previously known, rather than extended to new localities. The actual extension of service only amounted to two new routes, and over one of these, temporary stage coach service had been intermittently known, and possibly over the other route as well. This dismal showing would have been severely disappointing to the settlers if it were not for encouraging signs on the older routes: for the first time Iowa witnessed routes operating without mail contract subsidies, and what is even more noteworthy, stage lines competing with one another over four different routes.

The favorable stage coach signs offered by 1842 were almost exclusively due to the activities of a new firm of stage proprietors who entered the Iowa field for the first time in that year, Beers & St. John. The firm was composed of William St. John of Bloomington, who for a number of years had maintained a livery stable in that booming town, and Peter Beers, a veteran stager from the east central states, who entered the Iowa stage competition for the first time in this year. The partnership was probably formed some time after the government mail contracts were let in April, and before the middle of September.⁴⁹ They had combined their forces as Beers & St. John at least by the 16th of September, as an advertisement of that date announced the operation by the firm of an extensive line of opposition stages over the whole distance from Keokuk to Dubuque. The line was divided into four sections: Keokuk to Burlington, Burlington to Bloomington, Bloomington to Davenport, and Davenport to Dubuque. In addition there was a fifth line from Bloomington to Iowa City. From the prices charged passengers, and from certain services offered, it seems evident that the two men hoped to drive all competition off the five lines over which their stages ran, and to establish themselves as the dominant stage company in this potentially valuable area.⁵⁰

One of the three new routes extending staging to communities hitherto without the coach was the Davenport-

⁴⁹Contract bids were due at the Post Office Department no later than April 14, awards were made April 30. *House Docs.* No. 180, p. 1.

⁵⁰*Bloomington Herald*, October 28, 1842, the ad carried the date of September 16, when originally inserted. By 1844 Beers and St. John had largely achieved this ambition. They held contracts for stage-mail over the Davenport-Dubuque, Bloomington-Burlington, Bloomington-Davenport, and the Burlington-St. Francisville routes.

Dubuque line. After several temporary periods of stage service, this long delayed regular stage filled a gap which had existed from the first days of the territory. Even at that, Dubuque was fortunate to gain a mail stage in 1842, for the original advertisements of the Post Office Department failed to specify stages over the route. The service was ordered, it seems, because Otho Hinton's stage bid was only slightly higher than most of the bids for just horse-mail service; John Grace, for instance, filed a horse-mail bid for exactly the same figure for which Hinton agreed to provide a semi-weekly two-horse stage, \$1000. The route to be followed was from Dubuque through Silsbee, Springfield, and Point Pleasant, a distance of 74 miles. In addition to the stage mails, Davenport and Dubuque were granted a semi-weekly horse-mail. Since this followed a different route than that taken by the stage, the two towns at last had a mail service of which they could little complain.⁵¹

Over the Dubuque-Davenport route Hinton had the Beers & St. John stages for competition. The fare asked by the latter was four dollars, which indicates their intention not to share the route with Hinton, but to drive him out of business. Four dollars was less than the usual fare charged for passenger transportation, which was generally ten cents per mile.⁵²

The second of the new routes begun in this year, the Keokuk-Burlington stage, was entirely independent of a stage mail contract, in contra-distinction to the other two. The route enjoyed the added distinction of being the first Iowa route to boast of a daily line. The ambitious Beers and St. John were proprietors of this daily four-horse stage line, the only division of their entire 'system' upon which they did not have to face opposition. Their passenger rates reflected this fact, as the three dollars charged was more in line with the regular prevailing standards.

How long this service was maintained is not known, but it unquestionably depended upon their success in gaining a sufficient business on the four other lines. Though the records

⁵¹*House Doc. No. 180, pp. 232, 235-6.*

⁵²See C. R. Aurner, *Leading Events in Johnson County Iowa History*, Cedar Rapids, 1912, p. 205. In later years the charges dropped to about half, see Quafe, *Chicago's Highways Old and New*, p. 162.

are barren as to the outcome of this project, the fact that John Frink and Martin O. Walker were the dominant stage figures in the next ten years of Iowa, indicates their eventual failure.

Two stage lines operated this year on a regular schedule over the Bloomington-West Liberty-Iowa City route. One owed acknowledgements to a government mail contract, the other was a Beers and St. John opposition stage. Only over the keen competition of thirty-eight others, including such men as Hinton, Beers, St. John, and the former proprietor of the temporary route the preceding winter, Robert Gower, was the contract finally awarded to William Wilson, a comparative stranger to stage coach operation in Iowa. Wilson's contract stipulated that he be allowed to operate "one month on horse, if roads are bad and water high." Since his bid was accepted out of thirty-nine offered, the conclusion is that such conditions were expected to prevail.⁵³

Peter Beers and William St. John, though losing their separately filed bids for the contract, appeared determined to gain control of the route anyway, for in the same advertisement referred to, they advertised a tri-weekly stage from Bloomington to Iowa City. This was even better than that offered by Wilson's contract. Since the fares asked for passengers on this 28-to-30 mile route were again at about half the customary rate, \$1.50 only being charged, it seems that Beers and St. John were determined to drive Wilson's opposition stages off this line too. Bloomington was the home residence of William St. John, so perhaps this was not an idle threat, for the livery shops of St. John's were right on the scene of battle.

The legislative session of 1842 appears to have been responsible for temporary stage service during the succeeding winter months. C. Teeple advertised in November that he intended "running a line of Stages from Dubuque to Iowa City (upon the Mail Route now established) once a week in good two horse coaches," with "no traveling after eight."^{53a} Teeple was not the regular contractor for the horse-mail route let in April,

⁵³*House Docs., op. cit.*, pp. 238-9.

^{53a}Benj. F. Shambaugh, *The Old Capitol Remembers*, p. 217.

and the probabilities are that he ceased operation following the adjournment of the fifth territorial assembly on February 18, 1842.

The remainder of the staging record of 1842 is the story of the re-letting of the routes previously under contract, most without any changes whatsoever. The alterations noted in some were doubtless designed to improve the service of the mails over the routes.⁵⁴

The Burlington to Macomb, Illinois, route, for instance, was extended to include Rushville, Illinois. Though this did not increase the stage mail service at all, since Macomb and Rushville had had stage connections for some time, by placing the whole line under one contract, the service might have been expected to improve. Just the reverse of this procedure was followed in the case of the former Burlington to Davenport line, which was split in two, the southern section of 45 miles, the northern of 35 miles, with Bloomington the dividing point. George Miers won the contract for the northern half, Bloomington to Davenport, while Otho Hinton won the southern contract, terminating at Burlington, his contract being either carefully or shrewdly fixed at \$898. Although divided, the service on the points between Burlington and Davenport remained at a two-horse, semi-weekly stage level.

Possibly the service on the Burlington-Peoria stage mail route was increased in 1842 from a semi-weekly to a tri-weekly service. But this route, which passed through Osage, Illinois, Robin's Nest, Charleston, French Creek, Trenton, Knox County Court House (Galesburg), Cold Brook, Oquawka, and finally Burlington, although originally a once-a-week service, was shortly on a semi-weekly plane, and at least during the legislative session of 1839-40 on a tri-weekly level. Whether this 97 mile route maintained that frequency after 1840 is not known, though probable, despite no record of it in the Post Office Department records.

In view of the optimistic notes injected into 1842 by the activities of Beers & St. Johns, it will be well to remember that the permanency of these operations is not known. Also, that even after four years and a half, the Burlington to St. Francis-

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 231-45.

ville route remained on a semi-weekly basis, still contracted for by a two-horse stage service, and still granted the option of using a horse for three months per year. The Burlington to Mt. Pleasant stage likewise failed to furnish the department with sufficient proofs to warrant anything other than its lowly once-a-week stage. The only change made was that a horse mail was extended from Mt. Pleasant to Fairfield. And as for the others, William L. Toole was granted a four year contract for the New Boston to Harrison route, same rate of service at the same rate of pay, \$176; at Dubuque the Galena stage mail award stipulated a tri-weekly service as before.

One of the most unorthodox modes of conveying mail known to Iowa was the "Wheelbarrow Mail," as the editor of the Davenport *Iowa Sun* called it. This doubtless referred to the usual method used by John Wilson in transporting the mail from his ferry to the Davenport postoffice. Wilson was awarded a contract in 1842 for carrying the mails back and forth from Stephenson to Davenport, semi-weekly, for \$100 per year. This was an unusual contract, as most of the other stage lines in Iowa touching the Mississippi provided for the termination of the route on the other side of the river, e.g., Dubuque and Galena, New Boston and Harrison, Burlington and Peoria, and Burlington and Rushville.⁵⁵

While the routes and schedules, and the amount of service authorized by the contracts of 1842 little changed the previous arrangements, there were marked changes in the personnel of Iowa stage coach proprietors. Of those who held contracts for furnishing Iowa towns with stage mail prior to 1842, only two of the eight won their contracts in the last bidding. William S. Viney won the Burlington to Mt. Pleasant route which he already had, and William L. Toole won the Harrison to New Boston service he was awarded in 1841. But others fared very poorly. William H. Holcomb who had succeeded to both of the McCarver routes, Burlington to Davenport, and the Burlington to Macomb route, filed losing bids on each, as well as on the Burlington to Peoria line which he first put in operation in 1839. This was an extremely poor year for Holcomb,

⁵⁵*Iowa Sun*, August 6, 1842.

as he suffered losses in Illinois as well as in Iowa; his defeats in Iowa removed him, temporarily, from the Iowa scene of stage operation. Holcomb's successors on the Burlington to Davenport lines have been mentioned, George Miers and Otho Hinton, Alexander R. Dunn succeeded Holcomb over the Burlington to Rushville line, while William C. Butler and James Means won the Peoria route. Holcomb had a numerous company, however, for Richard Land failed to retain the St. Francisville service, it passing to J. Waugh, and George Ord. Karriek lost the Dubuque route to Galena to Gilbraith, Hackelton & Co. Even Abraham Tolles did not hold his lone Iowa contract, the Rushville to Fort Madison line, losing out to Thomas Burnett.

This change in faces was significant. It but marked a step beyond that of 1838. 1838 pushed the local horse contractor to one side, 1842 pushed the local man out of the picture, and introduced the large-scale operator.

RETROSPECT

While a cheerful picture may be made out of the developments of 1842, one can not make a stage coach boom out of two new stage routes and the opposition lines of Beers & St. John.

There was, to be sure, other encouraging evidence. Twenty-five to thirty-nine bids filed for each of the twelve stage mail routes serving Iowa towns, stood in sharp contrast to the six, eight, ten of previous years. Likewise the appearance among contesting proprietors of widely known large-scale stage operators was another omen that at last the Iowa field was profitable for stage coach exploitation. When an Otho Hinton, a former partner in the powerful Ohio Stage Company, contested all twelve of the stage bids, and twelve out of the thirteen horse-mail contracts, the strength of the hopeful signs can not be denied. In addition to Hinton, the abstracts of the 1842 bids shows Peter Beers' name on almost every bid, and in this year the famed John Frink entered the Iowa competitions for the first time, filing for the Dubuque to Galena stage route, which he lost, and the horse-mail from Dubuque to La Porte, which he won. In addition to these well known stage names

there were others, such as David McAlister, who was expanding in Illinois and Missouri at this time, also George Miers, and many others who had been active in Illinois and sought extensions into Iowa. From such evidence as this one might well conclude that the noviate or trial period for staging in Iowa was at an end, that at last she had come of staging age.

But there was a sober side to the 1842 picture equally impressive, which suggested that the day of fulfillment was yet years ahead. There were but twelve stage routes and fifteen proprietors operating in Iowa; four routes had only their western terminus in an Iowa river town, while the by far major proportion of the route extended into Wisconsin and Illinois;⁵⁶ two other stage lines had their eastern or southern destination points in other states;⁵⁷ only six of the twelve stage routes operated entirely between Iowa points. Of these six remaining lines, just two served interior points, one but recently created, and the other offered but a once-a-week service, neither penetrated more than thirty miles inland from the river.⁵⁸ Even the cheerful tones in the 1842 picture take a deeper hue when it is remembered that one of the two new routes had had temporary staging service before, one four years earlier, and possibly the second route had likewise watched an occasional stage rattle by. Furthermore, it is revealing of Iowa's general preparedness for extension of staging service that not a one of the nine older routes were re-let in 1842 with an increased stage service beyond that originally granted them or enjoyed at least a year earlier.

Back of all these dismal facts looms the Reason. In 1842 Iowa stage coach operation was confronted with the same problem which faced the territory when Dubuque began lustily to call for stage coach service in 1836. Iowa lacked population. In the first four years of the 1840's the territory grew at a rate of less than 10,000 a year. Large frontiers are not mushroomed into centers of culture nor are the amenities of established living obtained at such rates of growth. The causes for this slackening growth may be attributed among other things to the barrier of the Mississippi River, the handi-

⁵⁶The Dubuque-Galena, Burlington-Peoria, Burlington-Rushville, Fort Madison-Rushville routes.

⁵⁷The Harrison, Iowa-New Boston, and the Burlington-St. Francisville routes.

⁵⁸Bloomington-Iowa City and the Burlington-Mt. Pleasant routes.

cap of no river systems which flowed *into* the interior, and the presence on the western borders of the Red Man. Before the romanticist pictures stage coaches operating between every town and village of any size in the territory, let him also remember that in 1842 and for years to come, only a fraction of the future area of the state was open to the white settler. This meant that Iowa was to have a retreating frontier in the west while at the same time she had in the east centers which had long passed that period. For the stage coach proprietor this meant well established business lines in the east, and risky gambles in the thinly settled western sections of the territory and state.

A comparison of the amount of stage coach service supported by a government contract in Wisconsin, Illinois, Missouri and Iowa is given below. For Wisconsin and Iowa this will represent almost the total amount of stage miles covered, but for Illinois and Missouri competing lines not carrying U. S. Mail do not show in these tables. A significant figure below is the density of population per square mile.⁵⁹

State	Population 1840	Density per sq. mile	Population 1850	Density per sq. mile
Iowa	43,112	0.8	192,214	3.5
Wisconsin	30,945	0.6	305,391	5.6
Illinois	476,183	8.5	851,470	15.2
Missouri	383,702	5.6	682,044	9.9

STAGE COACH—MILES RUN PER YEAR

State	1837-8	1838-9	1839-40	1840-1	1841-2
Iowa	31,408	95,160	29,224	No Report Made	31,720
Wisconsin			64,896		58,592
Illinois	677,040	991,877	1,107,392	Report Made	1,067,456
Missouri	97,552	303,810	308,360		276,080

While the picture of 1842 was neither all rosy nor all dark, it was evident that the future extension of a net work of stage coach lines in Iowa was not far distant.

⁵⁹*Census of Iowa for 1880 . . . with other Historical and Statistical Data, 1883*, pp. 4-5, 11, 12, 168; Annual Report of the Post Master General, found in House and Executive Documents for each of the years above except 1840-1, for which no detailed report was submitted, serial volumes 321, 363, 375, 416.

THE LOCAL PREACHER

BY REV. R. E. HARVEY

No just appraisal of the religious forces in pioneer Iowa life is complete without some recognition of an almost extinct genus of layworkers, which, although found in nearly all the Protestant denominations, were best known as Local Preachers, the title bestowed on them by the Methodists. This title was in distinction from the "traveling preachers," or circuit riders, who shifted from place to place at frequent intervals, traveled immense parishes, oftentimes including several counties.

Endowed with the trinity of "gifts, graces, and usefulness" requisite for the ministry, the local preachers employed their talents, as leisure from secular pursuits permitted, in soul-winning and character building as auxiliaries to the regular clergy. Serving as willing pulpit supplies whenever flood, blizzard, sickness, or revival engagemment broke in on the fixed pastoral schedule, the local preacher in addition performed without any compensation many other pastoral duties in their communities, such as visiting the sick, burying the dead, holding prayer meetings, organizing Sunday Schools, etc. Some of these layworkers after they had attained ecclesiastical orders enjoyed a notoriety as "marrying preachers," not always as highly approved by the regular ministry as their other activities.

Nearly all callings and professions were represented in the ranks of those helpmates of the church; some ministered to both body and soul, as did Dr. Samuel Fullenwider, founding father of Yellow Spring Presbyterian Church, and leading proponent of Yellow Spring Academy, in Des Moines County. Dr. Joseph Hamilton, organizer of the Methodist Protestant Church in Washington, and surrounding counties was another who ministered to the sick of body and soul. There were attorneys, also, such as the Rectors, father and son, who planted the Methodist Episcopal Church in Sydney, before the advent of any conference representative. Educators like A. J. Heustis, originator of the embryo from whence proceeded Iowa Wesleyan College, at Mt. Pleasant, and Prof. Samuel S.

Howe, whose private seminary at the same place was as highly renowned for its piety as for its scholarship, were still others who joined to their profession the labors of a local preacher. Most of the local preachers who contributed so volubly to the moral and spiritual life of pioneer Iowa were farmers.

There were many other local preachers whose sincerity and earnestness were testimony of the strength of their faith. Rev. John Burns, of the United Brethren Church, preached far and wide in Lee County as a local preacher, attempting no formal organization, leaving his converts to enrich the various churches already extant. Another outstanding local preacher of the early days was Mrs. Elizabeth Atwood, Iowa's first woman preacher, during whose all too brief residence in Dubuque, the one house of worship was filled to capacity, and more, by her eager listeners.

Many of these faithful layworkers after demonstrating their capacity in the subordinate sphere, graduated into the regular ministry, where the practical knowledge of men and affairs they had acquired in business or professional life largely compensated for any scholastic deficiencies. There were others not so well equipped, but who felt the call for usefulness, and willingly acted as "Supply Pastors" on fields that otherwise would have gone uncared for. Always poorly paid, and too often but little appreciated, with no prospect of advancement, and no provision by the Church for their old age, some of them toiled on for many years, their principal reward being the consciousness of doing work which otherwise, without them, would have gone undone. In later years, by a long delayed act of justice, several denominations are according this class of preachers a greater permanency of employment and a share in their pension funds.

An outstanding example of the Supply Pastor at his best was the Rev. John Elliott, who first adorned the Iowa landscape as a wayside blacksmith, in a locality left to one side by the railway lines. Here by virtue of a local preacher's license granted him originally in his native Ireland, he exercised his talents to such purpose that hearers in droves went out from the distant county seats to the revivals held by the "Irish

Blacksmith" in the country school-houses. His efforts resulted in at least two flourishing village churches.

An appreciative Presiding Elder employed him as a Supply on a pastorless circuit, where his efficiency earned for him a recommendation to Annual Conference membership. Episodes of his examination before the committee on ministerial qualifications held fragrant place in ministerial repertoire for half a lifetime:

"Brother Elliott," queried an examiner, "how many sacraments are there?"

"Sacraments is it? Sure there's fower."

"Four? what are they?" The examiner perhaps suspected this son of the Emerald Isle of some Romanistic additions to the recognized Protestant ordinances of Baptism and Holy Communion.

"Weal, sir, the Elder he comes to the fairst quairterly meetin' and we have the fairst sacrament. Thin he comes to the second quairterly meetin' and we have the second sacrament, and the same at the thaird and fowerth quairterly meetins."

Certainly an exact way of setting forth the practice once followed, due to a lack of ordained clergymen, of observing the Lord's Supper only upon the visits of the Presiding Elder, and continued for a century after it ceased to be necessary. But unfortunately for John Elliott, because so lacking in credal lore, that, coupled with other deficiencies, the committee was obliged to refuse him a passing grade.

The sincerity of the man was never more evidenced than afterwards. Nothing daunted, the Irish Blacksmith went to another Supply charge, and another, and another. Bishops and Presiding Elders came and went, but Uncle John Elliott went on for three decades, serving fifteen pastorates of two years each, no more, no less. They were not all of them hard-scrabble circuits either, for his quaint wit, homely common sense, superlative piety and whole souled earnestness made him an acceptable shepherd to flocks boasting of a wider culture than he ever attained. With his fellow workers he was always a brother beloved, willingly helpful, and remarkably free from envy of those who surpassed him in gifts. A successor met him

one day perambulating the streets of a former parish:

“Hello, Uncle John, are you looking up your old tracks?”

“Whist, Brather, I’m joost a-round a-salting yere sheep: tellin’ ’em how much better prachin’ they’ll get from a foine young mainister joost out of college.”

Much of his success perhaps should be attributed to his splendid Irish wife, a genuine mother in Israel, excellent helpmeet, and able at times to outpreach her husband; but especially renowned for never letting an opportunity slip, either public or private, of apprising young theologues of their utter worthlessness until in possession of the right sort of companions. Altogether, a unique useful pair, types for which the molds have been lost in this era of standardization.

The great majority of layworkers, however, could not leave their professions or business for the wandering supply pastorate. Among the many well known figures who tilled the soil and reaped the harvests of his faith was James Wishard, whose story should not be uninteresting to this later age.

Long and lovingly known as “Father Wishard” in the areas of his activities, James Wishard was born in southern Indiana early enough in the nineteenth century to retain vivid recollections of the earthquake year, 1812. Licensed as a local preacher while quite young, he developed an unusual degree of evangelistic ability; in one such adventure which he delighted to relate, a general Christmas debauch in a neglected community was forestalled by a revival of such power that it became necessary to ask the congregation to withdraw outdoors, to make room for the penitents and their admonisher inside. One of the converts of that night’s labor was the Rev. Daniel McIntyre, who spent more than fifty years in the ministry, and who died in Osceola in 1891.

Migrating to Iowa in the territorial epoch of the state, James Wishard located near Birmingham, Van Buren County, from which circuit he was recommended to the annual conference of the Methodist Church in 1849 for ordination. After being duly examined, he was elected by that body to “local” orders, and by the hands of saintly Bishop Edmund S. Janes was ordained a “Deacon in the Church of God.”

Following the frontier westward, a few years later Wishard

took up a claim at the "Head of Platte," on the line between Union and Ringgold counties, where, amidst the strenuous task of making a new farm out of the raw sod, he ministered as he could to the spiritual needs of the settlers. Their rapidly increasing numbers, however, speedily convinced him that the demands of the group for the offices of the church were too great for the time at his command. Hearing of a Quarterly Meeting of the Decatur Mission, to be held at Hopeville, thirty miles to the east, he repaired there to lay the needs of his community before the presiding elder, Rev. John Hayden, of the Fort Des Moines District. The Decatur Mission was itself a new pastoral charge, having been set off the preceding September, 1854, from the Chariton Mission. The new charge was assigned to Rev. David T. Sweem, a young man just admitted on trial, who was allotted \$50 of missionary funds.¹

One must needs read pioneer church history to catch the flavor of those old time quarterly gatherings. At four times a year earnest Christian men and women from all over the far flung circuit assembled, spending the time from Friday evening "at early candle lighting" to Monday noon, listening to able sermons by the presiding elder and visiting ministers, recounting their own religious experiences, participating in the fervid Sunday "Love Feast" and Communion Service. The meeting usually wound up in a warm revival attended by conversions. Not to be overlooked was the enjoyment to be had in the whole-hearted western hospitality never displayed to better advantage than on such occasions. The interest of this tale lies in the "Quarterly Conference" business meeting, in which the local preachers, class leaders, stewards, and trustees of the circuit looked after the temporal interests of the church.

The business session of the Hopeville meeting first met Saturday afternoon, at which time Wishard presented his church certificates and credentials. Since his Deacon's parchments gave him a sacerdotal rank above that of the pastor, who must pass two entire years on trial before ordination, he was re-

¹ That the money was well earned is evident from Rev. Sweem's report to the following Conference: 446 full members of the Church; 100 probationers—new converts; seven Sunday Schools with 229 scholars, while the missionary bread cast upon the waters came back in \$67 of benevolent contributions. See Journals of the Iowa Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church for 1854 and 1855.

ceived both cordially and with due respect. The first meeting was largely taken up with the examination of five young licentiates, candidates for admission on trial to the "Traveling Connection," so called in distinction from the "local" ministry. they were applying for recommendations which they could present to the next Annual Conference.

Think not that this recommendation was a mere perfunctory performance, gratifying youthful ambition to "join Conference"; these plain country people took their ecclesiastical duties seriously, as become those who regarded the ministry as a divine institution and themselves as door keepers thereunto. Any of these boy preachers might be appointed as their own pastor—would they be satisfactory spiritual guides? and if not, had they the right to inflict them upon others? Moreover should there develop Presiding Elder or Bishop timber from that unseasoned group would their quality reflect honor or reproach upon those who opened to them the gate of opportunity? That all five passed the ordeal successfully may be taken as conclusive evidence of the soundness of their conviction that they were called to preach.

Taking advantage of the postponement of the financial matters due to the absence of some of the stewards who had not yet arrived, James Wishard presented his request that his neighborhood be made a preaching point on the circuit of the assigned preacher; Wishard also expressed the hope that at the next conference the region might, together with the contiguous counties, be made a new circuit of itself. Now the addition of sixty miles to the hundreds already required in reaching twelve Sunday congregations on his four weeks round, with probably as many more on week days or evenings, was no trifling matter for the preacher in charge. An entire new circuit was decidedly something else again. The Presiding Elder probably expressed the belief of many when he said, "I've been through your country, Brother Wishard, and it looks like a mighty poor prospect for making a living there, let alone support a preacher." On his advice the request was negatived. But to salve the disappointment, the petitioner was invited to conduct the 9 o'clock Sunday Love Feast, a

devotional and testimonial service expected to set the spiritual keynote for the whole day's meetings.

But James Wishard's plea was not done with. Came Monday morning and the adjourned Quarterly Conference, when, in response to the question "What has been paid for the support of the ministry this quarter?" the Stewards were expected to present their reports of collections. From our point of view, and indeed their own, the results were pitifully meager. The pastor's quarterly salary claim was \$70 cash, with \$31.25 for table allowance. Not one class met its quota. Don't call it stinginess, for their relatively generous benevolent offering was exceeded by only two charges in the whole district. Money was unavoidably scarce in a region where every pound of farm produce marketed, and every head of live stock sold, must be wagoned or driven to the "River," a week's tedious travel distant, where it brought just exactly what they could get for it. Besides, dollars coming so hardly must be hoarded carefully to pay for their land claims. So it is not strange that most of the payments were in kind; salt meat, chickens, grain, potatoes, dried fruit, homespun cloth, yarn, even raw wool, with scanty tricklings of fractional silver, and "shin-plaster" currency of doubtful parentage.

When all reports were in James Wishard walked up to the Recording Steward's table and laid down a five dollar gold piece as "quarterage for myself and family at the Head of Platte." The effect was electrical. That bit of gold spoke a language all its own, and well understood by those poverty bitten pioneers; not a point on the circuit had sent in that much cash, and before the donor got to his seat a voice cried out, "Elder Hayden, I move a reconsideration of the vote about taking this brother's place into the circuit!" A volley of lusty "ayes" made it unanimous. After a consultation and readjustment of dates and hours of services elsewhere, to allow the two days added ride necessary to reach the "Head of Platte," the pastor on that circuit told Wishard, "you may give out the word when you get home, that, the Lord willing, I will preach at your house a week from next Wednesday night." Thus the Head of Platte was on the Church map.

Heedful of the scriptural command to "Ask Largely," the

local minister from the Platte renewed his petition for a preacher of their own in the new settlement. Again the Presiding Elder demurred: "You can't feed a preacher in that new country; there isn't missionary money enough to take care of a man and his horse, to say nothing of his family, and where could they live?"

"Well, Elder, you've seen what I expect to pay, and the rest will do what they can; we will divide our hominy and hog meat; the prairies are covered with grass he can cut for hay; he can shuck corn for me on the shares to grain his horse and bread his family. There is a cabin on my claim that can be fixed up for them to live in."

The Elder was still skeptical. "But you are from the East where they are used to good preaching, and you wouldn't be satisfied with the kind of preacher that might be sent you."

Wishard was not to be denied, "Elder, send us anybody, and we will be happy, just so he's got religion and can read the Bible and pray with us and help us save our children from going to the devil!"

The Presiding Elder was weakening when he inquired "Would you take one of these young men we had before us on Saturday?"

He got his reply promptly, "Elder Hayden, I never yet held up my hand to recommend a brother for the traveling connection that I wouldn't take his first year myself!"

There was no denying this kind of a petition, "Brother Wishard," the Elder informed him with deep emotion, "Please God, you shall have a preacher next year! Now after the quarterly meeting on the Winterset circuit, the first week in September, I will come your way on my road to Conference at Keokuk. Have some of the brethren in from the points that want preaching and we will plan the circuit to lay before the Bishop." By such steps as these the border of the Kingdom moved another day's journey into the wilderness.

Now for the outcome. Forty years subsequent to these transactions, the writer had as a parishioner a fine old local preacher, Rev. W. C. Williams, who had been a member of Conference several years in early life, and then returned to secular pursuits, retaining his ordination parchments. Find-

ing on my first call at his home that he had preached in Union and Ringgold counties, I mentioned Father Wishard, and related the anecdote as given above.

The old gentleman listened with close attention: "Well, Brother Harvey, you've got that pretty straight: I did not suppose that there was a person living, besides myself, that knew anything about that Hopeville Quarterly Meeting." In reply to my query if he had been there, he said, "I was youngest of the five recommended to the Conference for admission on trial. More than that, when Bishop Simpson read out the appointments, I was assigned to the Union-Ringgold Mission. I held my first service at the Head of Platte, in Brother Wishard's cabin, and he told the people all about how hard work it was to get them a preacher."

"And how did things turn out that year?" I inquired.

"Splendidly! We never went hungry, and I never had to sleep out on the prairies while riding the circuit; there were a lot of conversions, new members kept moving in, and next year the work was divided, with a preacher for each county."²

When we made a verbal survey of his original circuit as it was in that day we found that not counting other denominations there were then fifteen Methodist pastors, with over four thousand parishioners, maintaining a full quota of parsonages and more than thirty church or chapel buildings in the area where only a generation before it was uncertain if even one minister could be furnished with a bare living. The instances have been rare where the investment of one gold piece has produced a larger visible harvest of results, and of those unseen records, the number of men and women strengthened through the intervening years, can only be guessed.

The declining years of this faithful follower of his Lord were clouded by misfortune. Due to the depression of 1870 and the heavy mortgage on his farm imposed by the assumption of a large debt, together with the long lingering illness and subsequent death of his wife, he lost his farm at near eighty

² The Journal of the Conference of 1854 indicates that Mr. Williams received from the Union-Ringgold Mission, as "quarterage" and "table expenses" \$226.90; which with \$100 missionary appropriation made a fairly good living income, at least for those days when twenty-five cents was a good wage for swinging a scythe 12 to 14 hours in the hay-field. He reported a church membership of 215, with 52 probationers as the converts of his revival meetings.

years of age. Alone, penniless, with no relatives to afford him shelter, he had no recourse than to apply for admission to the county home, where he was treated more as an honored guest than as a public charge.

Learning of Wishard's presence in the Home, Rev. P. J. Vollmer of Mt. Ayr secured consent to hold religious services for the residents of the Home. Some time later, the Rev. F. T. Scott, another local preacher, conducted a very successful revival meeting at Side Hill, where the residents of the Home were later transferred; the result was the formation of a society and the erection of a church, which at its dedication was named "Wishard Chapel," in commemoration of the aged pilgrim whose involuntary sojourn amongst the poorest of the land brought forth such abundant spiritual fruit.³

It is a pleasure to add that after two or three years of residence in the County Home, Father Wishard's situation, through the caustic comments of a quite irreligious journalist, became matter of concern to the Methodist Church, resulting in the formation of two groups of Christian gentlemen, located respectively in Mt. Ayr and Corning, who by contributing ten dollars apiece per annum enabled the good old man to pass his remaining days as a paying guest in the home of a worthy couple, intimate friends of the writer, where he heard some of the foregoing reminiscences. Here he quietly fell asleep when past ninety years of age.

It is men and women like these consecrated citizens who are the true wealth of a nation, a state, and a community.

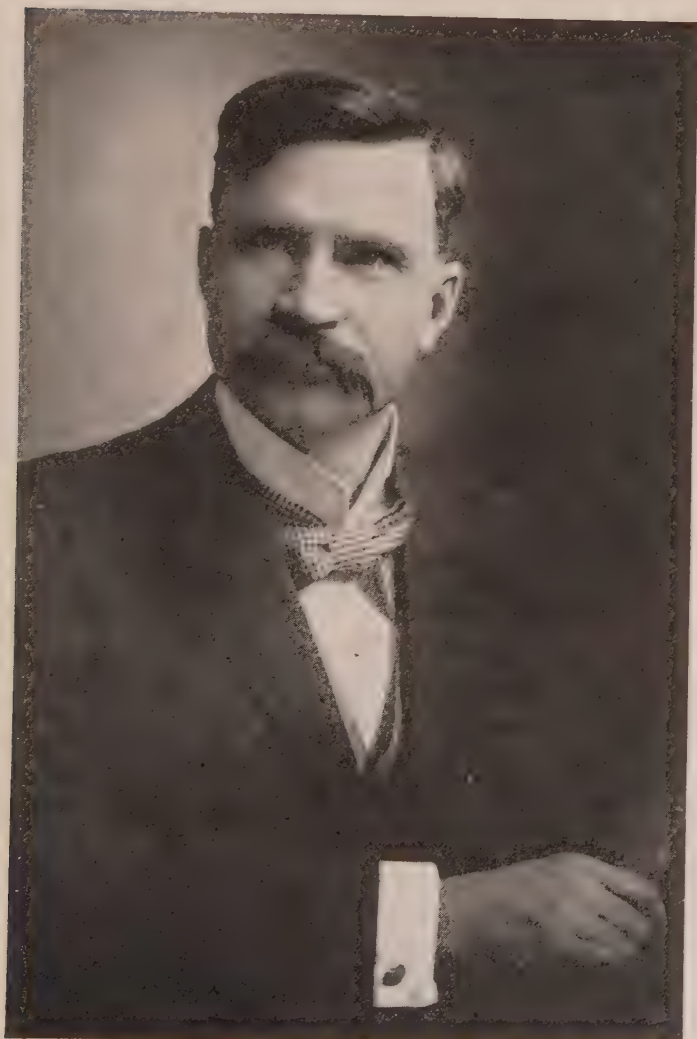
³ In the Creston News-Advertiser, Nov. 16, 1937, was an account of the semi-centennial¹ of the dedication of the Wishard Chapel, on November 14. The Society was described as "an active country Church, and especial strong-hold for young people." The sketch relates that Father Wishard toured the country in a borrowed team and buggy while the church was under construction, going as far as Afton soliciting subscriptions for the enterprise, and succeeding in obtaining a very considerable sum.

A DUFFLE BAG DIARY OF AN AMERICAN RED CROSS WORKER IN FRANCE

BY ELLIS E. WILSON

There was a similarity in the tasks of most American Red Cross workers who went overseas during the World War Period, 1914 to 1918. It was nearly a year later before A. R. C. activities lessened. The experience of one laborer in its ranks tells the story of many. Similar duties brought like ordeals. True there were often personal contacts which made particular impressions. A daily record hurriedly written could only be a jumble. A hop, skip and jump dairy. A duffel bag into which was thrown promiscuously each day's doings and observations. Comrades are now widely scattered, yet in my memory there abide many names, several distinctive personalities, and numerous kindly faces. My early training being somewhat puritanical, may explain some of my impressions.

Herein is given a nine months daily memorandum as copied from my personal diary and from letters with some amplifications and clarifying written to my wife mostly from Paris, France. It is not put into print because of any particular worth it may possess but to visualize to persons interested, the every day occurrences the Armageddon-like conflict brought to those engaged in auxiliary war services. Not a history of the American Red Cross overseas, but the story of the trail traveled and of things seen, heard and done each day by one person. Individual experiences may in time be recognized as the truest and most interesting records of the war. A volume of perhaps more importance and greater interest could be written reciting the trials, adventures and afflictions of myself and comrades which were not set down in my diary. Too much matter of fact while the romance is lost. Each recorded event suggests a score of remembrances worthy of being preserved. Most grievous regret is that I failed to record each day the names of those comrades with whom my work brought me in contact. A. R. C. dangers were trifling compared with those of the soldier boys and—



ELLIS E. WILSON

Picture taken in 1916

We are thankful that we never knew
The Hell our soldiers travailed through.

OCTOBER

The world is cold to him who pleads,
The world bows low to worthy deeds.

Tuesday 10-1-1918

Arrived at Camp Scott Barracks, Chicago, after having been home to Waterloo, Iowa, on a three day leave preparatory to starting overseas. Visited wife who is doing her share to win the war by operating her farm near Waterloo. Turned my pass home to officers in charge.¹ Enlisted Sept. 17, 1918. Stated in application that I had no dependents, that my wife had ample resources of her own. Many applicants asked for an allowance from Red Cross funds to support their families which was granted if volunteers were accepted. By order of the War Department, the American Red Cross is militarized and is mobilized and conducted as a regular military organization.

Wednesday 10-2-1918

On guard duty. Short time drill today. Major Harding advised us Company A would leave for Greenwich, Connecticut, in about ten days. Getting data for passports. Expedient to have guards on duty at all hours day and night. Many visitors passing in autos viewing the camp or stopping to see friends or relatives. Rigorous army discipline enforced.

Thursday 10-3-1918

On guard duty all day. Two companies occupied the drilling field, Midway Plaisance, Cottage Grove Avenue most of the day. Best of food on the tables. Auto driving tests. Applicants required to show their skill in auto driving at a preliminary examination. The test is made by having each drive an old Ford chassis with a loose board for a seat through a soft mud hole, then along on top of an old stone wall, turning

¹ All persons engaged in war activities were granted immunity from certain levies. The following order relieved me from paying any tax on my railroad ticket when purchased: "United States of America, The American National Red Cross Exemption Certificate, War Tax on the Transportation of Persons, The bearer Ellis E. Wilson is traveling on official Red Cross business from Chicago, Ill., to Waterloo, Iowa, and is entitled to tax exemption. L. E. Lord, Bureau of Personnel." New York Branch, National Headquarters.

at right angles with the wall or go into a cellar, up a hill, then down, then onto two planks, elevated at the further end, stop quick or go into a dump, and drive fast all the way. These tests afforded turbulent amusement to those who had time to be onlookers. Returned soldiers lectured apprising us of the rocks, shell holes, ditches and wire fences an ambulance driver must avoid on the battle fields.

Friday 10-4-1918

Members of Company A received passes to go up town to the city offices of the American Red Cross in order to have birth certificates and other necessary papers prepared for securing passports. Very little drill. Had my dinner down town. Wrote wife from Y. M. C. A. rooms. Photos for passports received at barracks. Caricatures and the boys howled. Pictures taken in groups and then separated. Only a few could be used on passports. A matronly maid patrols the sidewalks around the camp and warns giddy girls to beware the villainous boys wearing the khaki.

Saturday 10-5-1918

Some drilling. Day spent mostly in receiving orders. Dance at night. Major Harding says Company A will go to Greenwich, Connecticut Saturday, the 12th, for a week's stay before sailing. No one is certain about going. No passports have been received from Washington, D. C. The government officials evidently sought and received personal reports concerning every applicant. A few whose parents were of German birth apparently rejected for that reason alone.

Sunday 10-6-1918

Refused passes to go to church. Had pictures taken second time in Edelweiss Hall. Plenty of breakfast and lunch. Took a hike. Sailor girls played and there was dancing all evening at barracks. Numerous Chicago boys are enrolled in Companies A and B. This was a farewell party for Company A. One recruit who was an excellent singer dropped from roll. Narcotic user.

Monday 10-7-1918

Up at 6 A. M. Roll call. Everyone ordered to shave. Company A took a hike and then had breakfast. Short drill before dinner and a lot after. Letter from wife with personal

recommendations as to my fitness for the work, which were handed into headquarters. Mr. Woodward of Chicago requested me as a personal favor, to look after his young son and report to him. A long hike after supper. Letter from wife with photos for my passport. The pictures taken by the Red Cross photographer are so unsatisfactory that many of the boys furnish their own. The fact is the photos would not sufficiently identify the holder of a passport.

Tuesday 10-8-1918

Went to Federal Post Office, Chicago, in auto with a bunch of fellows to sign up applications for passports. Came back to Camp Scott on elevated railway. After dinner officers told Company A men they would have a two day furlough. Could do as we pleased. Took a walk with others to Jackson Park and Lake Michigan. Back to camp for supper. In evening went to movie. Wrote two letters to wife. Most of Company A have gone for a visit before starting east. More than one half of Company A are residents of Chicago or its environs so a two-day pass was sufficient for them to say good-bye. Two girls wearing men's khaki overcoats slipped past the gate guards at the entrance to the wire enclosed tent field and made merry with the boys.

Thursday 10-10-1918

General routine work at the barracks. Why the saltpeter the boys are asking. Most of them have returned from furloughs and are ready to go. Have suit cases filled with various articles but cigarettes predominate. One friendly comrade who was detailed to make up the kits told me he had put a very fine pocket knife in my outfit. A Chicago citizen gave me an auto ride up town and then I rode back to the camp on street cars arriving before gates were closed. Sleeping in a tent now.

Friday 10-11-1918

Appointed to oversee and line up a squad of recruits. Called before Lieut. Byram who addressed me as Sergeant and told me to go to his office and take charge of it which I did. At desk all day. Promotions and changes come quickly, and why certain things are done it is not soldier-like to enquire. We are expected to do promptly what we are told.

Saturday 10-12-1918

At desk all day as clerk of Company A and until late at night. Given overseas suit, trunks and complete outfit. Clerk's job a badly mixed one. Called regiment roll in morning. A few absentees to report to officers. Each trunk contains at least two suits of underwear of good material, some all wool sweaters, socks, knife, scissors, needles, all sizes of safety pins, buttons, in fact every little as well as big thing that the Red Cross women could imagine might be needed for ourselves or to help the soldier boys in France. A generous outfitting, thanks to the Red Cross ladies everywhere. My knit sweater is marked Bay City, Michigan.

Sunday 10-13-1918

At desk all day. Boys busy getting grips and trunks packed. Taken down town in evening in trucks and autos and got on train for New York City. All of Company A, about two hundred men and boys. A noisy bunch until late. Slept in car seats made comfortable with baggage and blankets. Am forgetting about business matters at home. Away we go, Protestant, Catholic, Jew, loyal Americans, everyone ambitious to do something for his country. A hilarious night ride which all seemed to enjoy and they sang,

There's a long, long trail a-winding
 Into the land of my dreams,
 Where the nightingales are singing,
 And the bright moon gleams;
 There'll be lots of drill and hiking,
 Before my dreams all come true,
 Till the day when I'll be going
 Down that long, long trail with you.

Pack up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag,
 Tipperary,
 Keep the Home Fires Burning,
 You're Going to Wear a Crown.

Monday 10-14-1918

Woke up at Sandusky, Ohio. Had breakfast and dinner on train. Arrived at Buffalo at 2.30 P. M. New York State landscape nice and green. Boys making commotion all the time. At Buffalo we were given candy and cigarettes and at

Albany the same. Down Hudson river on east bank. Too dark to see the sights along river. Recalled some ten years ago when brother Frank and I rode on an excursion boat from New York City to Albany and return. Had been to Boston with Advertising Men's Excursion.

Tuesday 10-15-1918

Arrived at New York City about 3:00 A. M. Major Harding took us to depot restaurant and we had a light lunch, don't know who paid for it. Had my shoes shined, also paid for a shine for Mr. King of Laporte City, Iowa. Went back to our coach but were routed out and transferred to New Haven Railway. Reached Sound Beach, Connecticut about 6:00 A. M. Marched south about one mile to "Ye Old Greenwich Inn" located on Long Island Sound. Had a nice breakfast. At beach looking for shells. Helped the doctors inoculate in afternoon. Trunks and grips arrived by truck O. K. The Inn is a large wooden building and a well furnished summer hotel which had closed for the season. Leased to Red Cross, and used to house the boys until sent overseas. Inoculation against fevers started at once. Three shots.

Wednesday 10-16-1918

This place is called Camp King. Boys eating apples and hunting for star fish, oysters and stone. Found a broken arrowhead, also a fine specimen of a conglomerate stone which I will try to send home. We have the best of everything to eat. Lieut. Byram relieved of command of Company A and went back to Chicago. This relieves me of my duty as his clerk. Much jealous strife. Lieut. Fellows made captain of the company. Fine old orchard of choice variety of apples located on hotel ground of some five acres. The landlady tried to reserve the apples on a few trees, the best ones of course, but they were soon gone. The sea air is invigorating and the boys are always hungry.

Thursday 10-17-1918

Ordered to report to wait on tables at noon which I did and while carrying dishes from dining room was called to officers headquarters and told that I was made a sergeant, was to have charge of hospital headquarters as clerk and was to have an assistant. Moved my trunk and suitcase downstairs and took

charge of hospital desk. Do not have to report at roll call nor do I have to get up with the bugle. I am promoted to a very important task. Each person has to take three fever inoculations. Often the boys faint from the thrust of the needle. All had been inoculated for smallpox at Camp Scott, Chicago. Some one stole the cash from the hotel till.

Friday 10-18-1918.

In office all forenoon. Mrs. Jewett, mother of one of the boys sewed red crosses on the boys' caps. Took a walk along the beach. Made myself useful in office dealing out medicines and hearing complaints, most imaginary. Was called on and made a speech to the boys at the supper table. Some for various good reasons have been released and gone home. A few of the younger ones are homesick when they find they are up against real soldier life. Getting up early in the morning at bugle call, drilling, guard duty and other tasks. Attempted to cheer them up. They might get a pension some day.

Saturday 10-19-1918

Attended to my duties as medical sergeant. Dr. Irvine also Dr. Huffington went back to Chicago and Dr. Henderson of Stamford, Connecticut is to take their place. Took a walk on beach. Dance in evening at neighboring hotel. I went over about nine o'clock but few were present so came to my room. Crowd of local girls came later so fellows said. Turned in my old overcoat and got a new one. Had sergeant chevrons sewed on my coat. The people of Sound Beach are very friendly and do everything possible to make our stay in their village pleasant. Fine summer villas owned by wealthy New York City citizens located along the Sound. The owners give the boys many auto rides and are exceedingly kind and generous to wearers of the khaki. Regular U. S. army uniform with Red Cross insignia.

Sunday 10-20-1918

After breakfast in office. Not the law office of Wilson & Worthen, Waterloo, Iowa, but of Medical Department of American Red Cross, Camp King, Ye Old Greenwich Inn, Sound Beach, Connecticut. A walk on sea wall to the east. Man and wife at a fine villa stood at attention for a salute from me which I gave. Balmy east wind all day. Man in

fine mansion invited me to come into his home for a visit but told him I could not do so. Against orders. But we talked as he stood on his sea facing lawn and I on seawall. Owners of these villas have heavy stone wave protecting walls all along waters edge. A safe pleasurable footway on top of high wall for long distances. Sea breezes, water or sand bars on one side of walls and fine parkings and homes on the other. The man at this villa was interested in the Mesaba Iron Ranges of Minnesota and had many questions to ask about the middle west. I could stand on the wall and talk with him which I did but we are not allowed to visit in the homes of local people without permission.

Monday 10-21-1918

Fred Lundin, my assistant sergeant, took care of office most of day. Afternoon walk on beach wall. Talked for a half hour with a lady who was fishing. She said she and her husband were lawyers with offices in New York City. She was certainly an adept at fishing for she had a long string of sea crappies. Owns a cottage at the beach, but it has been wrecked by the waves because the seawall in front was not strong enough to withstand the force of the waves. Accidently dropped one of wife's letters and a dashing wave carried it away. Mailed picture of Ye Old Greenwich Inn to my sisters, Emma L. Allen of Waterloo, Iowa, and Elsie L. Schenk of Memphis, Missouri.

Tuesday 10-22-1918

Have one red eye from being out in the sunlight yesterday. army cap not sufficient protection. Complaint because caps have no leather visor to shade the eyes. Company B arrived from Chicago and with them Sergeant Marqua, who will be in the Medical Department. Company B is made up of a fine lot of fellows and their military maneuvers are equal to that of well trained soldiers. Culprit who robbed hotel money drawer apprehended and drummed out of camp, uniform taken from him, given a cheap suit of civilian clothes, marched to Sound Beach depot by guards, given ticket home and put on train.

Wednesday 10-23-1918

Rounding up things to accommodate Company B. Hotel

crowded. Did not inoculate members of Company B in afternoon as was expected but waited until evening when forty-nine were treated. Sound Beach civilians serenaded camp with songs. Expected Company A would vacate before Company B arrived but sailing of ocean liner on which they were to leave has been delayed.

Thursday 10-24-1918

Attended to my office duties. Letter from wife regarding public farm sale she is to hold. Ambitious are seeking favors. A wise man knows his limitations. Many recruits realize their inefficiency along certain lines because of lack of military training which is most prominent at present, and with other comrades can say with the poet Robert Duncan—

Indifference is the armor that we wear
To keep us from vain jealousies and jeers
We walk unruffled past the scers
Unmindful of each soldier's stare
For we will work among them debonair,
So utterly oblivious of their careers,
That they shall marvel at one who fears
No hidden threat, wherever he may fare.
They shall not know our armor has worn thin
They shall not guess our sun is sinking low,
Our banner stained and tattered by each word
Like gleaming spears. If lance thrust tear the skin
We will not cringe. And we alone shall know
There dangles at our side a broken sword.

Friday 10-25-1918

Helped inoculate a few recruits. In my hospital office about all day. It was intimated that I was not at present time to go overseas with Company A, but would be retained at my office duties until Company B was ready to go. Captain Fellows and others whose passports have not come are to wait. Company A is to leave for Quebec Sunday by train. Letter from wife saying her public sale had been put off on account of influenza by order of the Iowa State Board of Health. Influenza not causing any trouble at Sound Beach Camp.

Saturday 10-26-1918

Attended to duties in office. Miss Blank, a nurse of thirteen years experience, to be in hospital service. Inoculated

several of the newcomers. In afternoon with three companions went for a long row boat ride along Sound. Got horseshoe crabs and periwinkles. A goodbye banquet for Company A. Lobsters, clams, oysters, then speeches, followed by a dance. Red Cross money paid for this banquet but the occasion required a cheerful start for the workers. When walking along the beach, picked up some broken Indian arrowheads.

Sunday 10-27-1918

Everyone retired by twelve o'clock last night after the banquet and Camp King was very quiet. About one hundred twenty-five fellows of Company A ready to leave for Paris, go to Quebec tonight. Auto ride to Sound Beach Railway station. Company A marched. Miss Engle gave me two boxes of cigars to distribute to the boys which I did. She said her father, Charles Engle, donated them. Returned to barracks in auto with Sergeant Payne, driver, and others. Company given an abundance of practical advice. Each member appeared to visualize his respective duty and the important tasks to be performed. The thing most talked about is submarines. One recited,—

If by the Heinie's hand I fall
Mid the noble and the brave
A tear from my lady love is all
I ask for my soldier grave.

Monday 10-28-1918

Office work. Took walk on sea wall. Went to Stamford on street cars to get medical supplies. Dinner there at hotel \$1.50. Sergeant Lundin with me. Let jeweler repair wrist watch which wife gave me. It stopped in one-half hour after I returned to camp. The village drug stores of Sound Beach do not carry a variety of hospital supplies sufficient to meet the demand of the camp making it necessary to go to Stamford to secure them. Take this trip daily. Red Cross guards in most towns and villages to keep watch of the boys that they do not visit saloons or violate orders when away from headquarters on leave. Local residents say Connecticut will never have prohibition. Yankees were against such a law.

Tuesday 10-29-1918.

Attended to my duties as medical sergeant. In afternoon drove to Stamford and left wrist watch for further repairs and bought a few medical supplies. Beautiful houses along the Sound and a delightfully pleasant place to live. The homes are mostly owned by wealthy business people in New York City. Commuters.

Wednesday 10-30-1918

In afternoon went to Stamford. Got my watch paid \$1.00 for crystal, etc. Drove past old stone fences built by first settlers of boulders and limestone picked up from fields and old colonial houses of historical interest no doubt if their story was known. Just a little excitement every day about when another bunch may go over, passports, etc. For myself say nothing. Will do as ordered. It is understood that when the present volunteers are sent overseas, enlistments will be slackened until spring and a detail of officers will remain in charge of Camp King during the winter.

Thursday 10-31-1918.

Smoky Indian summer on the Sound. In afternoon Mrs. Palmer, whose husband is a New York City dentist came in an auto and took five of us to her home for a pink tea, back at five o'clock, a nice time, cider, tea, sandwiches, cake, piano playing, a little dancing. Rules and regulations very strict because of indiscretions of some of the boys. The hotel cook was fired after breakfast. Strong guard on duty to prevent Hallowe'en pranks. Liquor can be easily obtained and although it is against the order, some of the boys are given to drinking, often causing disturbances but most of them keep faith with their home ideals and do not indulge.

NOVEMBER

Friday 11-1-1918.

No hallowe'en pranks in camp. Went to Stamford, bought medicines, etc., \$1.05. Miss Blank took charge of medical department and I was ordered to report to headquarters which I did. Was given office work. I certainly have some friends. Gossip—. It was said that a certain volunteer contributed \$2,000.00 to Red Cross work that was made a lieutenant. Sev-

eral of us in row boats loaned by generous Sound Beach residents took a spirited trip along the Sound. Watched the gulls. Looked for curios.

Note: That \$2,000 lieutenant never appeared overseas.

Saturday 11-2-1918.

Reported at office headquarters and filed a few letters. My passport to England, France and Italy, along with others came from Washington, D. C., and I signed the same ready to be viséd. Invited out with five other fellows to a little party in village. Received pass for two hours. A lady came for us in a Packard auto and gave all a fine ride along Sound. Dance in evening at Inn. Three Clinton, Iowa, girls, Red Cross workers from Washington, D. C. here. A middle-aged fellow who kicked about the cooking, stayed out all night and next morning was found on the beach when tide was out, picking up and eating oyster from shell. He was taken home.

Sunday 11-3-1918.

No passes to go to church. Rev. Barney of the Congregational Church at Sound Beach came to the Inn in evening and preached. A collection was taken for him but the amount was small. Boys have very little spending money. Said something about sheep. Better if he had talked about horned goats.

Monday 11-4-1918.

At offices. Hotel getting ready for new contingent. Company C coming from Chicago. Wholesome Sound apples in orchard about gone. Some of the trees must be a century old. A few pears also.

Tuesday 11-5-1918.

Company C arrived at ten o'clock A. M. Company B marching to Sound Beach depot to meet them. Ye Old Greenwich Inn filled. Because of infractions of regulations several mischievous boys were confined in the guard house which in army language is called the "hoosegow," on a bread and water diet with green apples for dessert. Our daily life seems to be made up of a series of incidents. And some who were fat are getting thin and some who were lank and lean are getting fat.

(Cont. in Next Issue)

PLANK ROADS IN NORTHEASTERN IOWA

Recently evidence has come to light of a plank road activity in the vicinity of Dubuque about which little had hitherto been known. As a fine supplement to the article of Mr. Remley J. Glass on the plank roads of Iowa which appeared in the January issue, the report of the Board of Directors of the Dubuque and Sageville Plank Road Company is given below, as it appeared in the *Dubuque Weekly Miners Express* of July 28, 1852. For some reason this company was never incorporated by an act of the state legislature, although they did actually build and operate a portion of the road. A portion of the road, at least, was in use as late as 1854, as is indicated by an advertisement of an omnibus service of September 13, 1854, in the same Dubuque paper. The proprietor of the line stated that he was ready to carry passengers "regularly between Waples House [a hotel] and Davis' farm, on the Plank Road." The fare charged was five cents each way.

REPORT

The President and Directors of the Dubuque and Sageville Plank Road Company report, that two hundred and twenty-one shares of stock have been taken, which, at twenty-five dollars per share, makes the sum of five thousand five hundred and twenty-five dollars. The first instalment of five per cent on each share was paid soon after the organization of the company and of the second, third, and fourth instalments of twenty per cent on each share, the sum of two thousand six hundred and forty-five dollars has been paid, making in all received up to this time, the sum of two thousand nine hundred twenty-one dollars and twenty-five cents. So soon after the organization of the company as practicable, we employed J. C. Jennings as engineer, to survey and locate the road. License having been granted by the County Court of Dubuque to construct a plank road, and to use for such purpose thirty feet of the public highway leading from Dubuque to Sageville, the engineer was instructed to locate it on the west half of the public highway, which was done. Immediately after the road was located, the distance, $41\frac{1}{2}$ miles, was divided into three sections, and proposals issued through the newspapers of

this city, for the earth work. The first section commencing at the north line of the corporation, and terminating at or near the north west corner of John E. Miller's enclosure, was taken by M'Gowen and Tool at 12 cts per square yard, for excavation and embankments, which, together with the work on culverts, walls, and extra work, amounts to the sum of six hundred twenty-two dollars and fifty-one cents.

The second section terminating a few rods north of Capt. Smith's barn was let to M'Gowen and Welch at 12 cts. per square yard, for excavations and embankments, which together with the work on culverts and extra work, amounts to the sum of eight hundred seventeen dollars and eight cents.

The third section was let to Patrick Sherman at 18 cents per square yard, for excavations and embankments, which, together with work on culverts and extra work, amounts to the sum of fifteen hundred and four dollars (and) ninety-four cents.

The contractors on the first and second sections have been paid in full, and nine hundred fifty-three dollars and fifty-five cents have been paid to the contractor on the third section, leaving a balance due him of five hundred and fifty-one dollars thirty-nine cents. The road bed was ready for the plank about the first of January last, but owing to the great difficulty in getting plank, we have as yet been able to lay only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile.

A contract has been entered into with L. Maloney to furnish three inch oak plank at eleven dollars per thousand, delivered on the landing in this city. About twenty-six thousand feet have been delivered and laid, and we are daily in the expectation of the receipt of one hundred and fifty thousand feet more, and the balance to complete the road can probably be delivered as fast as it may be wanted.

The following estimate will show the probable cost per mile:

Earth work, including extra earth work, bridges, culverts, &c	\$1060.00
Plank, including sleepers, board measure, 160 M feet at \$11.00 per M	1760.00

Shaping and laying at \$1 per rod	320.00
Engineering and superintendence	35.00
Total	<u>3175.00</u>

It will be thus seen, that when this work was commenced, we knew nothing about plank roads, and made our estimates too low (for we did not estimate the cost at more than \$2200 per mile) or that we have paid much too high for work and materials, and yet, when we look at the cost of plank roads in the east, and compare the price of labor and lumber here with it there, the difference is not so great.

The Syracuse and Central Square Plank Road, 16 miles long, cost \$1487 per mile, with lumber at \$5.10 per M.

The Rome and Oswego road, 62 miles, cost about \$1300 per mile, with lumber at from \$4 to \$5 per M.

The lumber in each of these roads is hemlock, which can be afforded cheaper, but is far inferior to oak. The cost of their excavations and embankment was from ten to fifteen cents; on ours, twelve, except on the 3d section, where to form embankments a large portion of the earth was carried over 100 feet; in such cases, the price is usually doubled; the price on this section was 18 cents per yard. All the work was examined and measured by the engineer. We cannot believe that plank roads can be properly constructed in this country for less than the above estimate, unless the savings shall be in the price of lumber, which is more than double that of eastern prices. There may have been, and probably is, some superfluous ditching on the road, but, being inexperienced in work of this kind, we have thought it best to err on the safe side, and to make the road everything it should be, for strength and durability, and for rapidity, safety and economy of carriage; and we think these ends have been obtained. If completed on the plan proposed, there will probably not be so well built a road in the West. It will last for twelve or fifteen years, with an expenditure of not more than \$10 per mile annually for repairs.

It will yield the first year, at a moderate charge for toll, not less than 10 per ct. After the first year, while the cost of repairs will not be increased until the first superstructure is

worn out, the profits will be increased in the ratio of the increase of travel.

Believing that the road will be of great public utility, and an index to the enterprise of our citizens, we would urgently recommend that it should be carried forward with prudence and energy to an early completion.

The capital stock of the company is now only eight thousand dollars, it should be increased to fifteen thousand. Several stockholders have paid only the first instalment of five per cent, and some the second, but the great majority have paid the 4th.

The 5th was called for the first of this month; of this but about \$20 have been paid in.

RECAPITULATION.

Amount of stock subscribed, two hundred and twenty-	
one shares at \$25 per share	\$5,525
Amount paid in	\$2,921.25
Amount paid out for work ..	3,000.59
Amount due contractor on 3d sec.	551.39
Amount sec for about 26,000 (ft) lum-	
ber at \$11 per m.	286.00
Amount lumber additional culvert's and	
laying, about 75 rod of plank, about	180.00
	<hr/>
	\$1,017.39

Respectfully submitted,

J. J. Dyer	}	Directors
J. P. Farley		
Platt Smith		
L. Maloney		
H. Thompson		

Mr. Remley J. Glass, has placed on our desk some information¹ relating to the construction of a plank road across part of the Arizona desert, from Yuma to the Imperial Valley, California, which interestingly shows the vitality of the idea of wooden highways. In 1912 the business men of California in an effort to provide easier access to California for the motorist, laid two parallel strips of twelve inch planks across the

¹The Buick Magazine, June, 1939.

sands. This plank road was maintained until 1916, when the California State Highway Commission replaced this abbreviated plank road with a solid plank highway, made of railway ties. Though a better road, it was harder to handle in the shifting sands of the desert. Eventually, in 1925, a study of the shifting sands and the development of modern highway engineering succeeded in constructing a cement highway between the two points, still in successful use.

STAGE COACH NOTICES

Capt. Frye, of the Iowa House, has recently brought to this place, an excellent nine passenger, four horse Troy built post coach, with the intention of running it between this place and Iowa City as often as may be required.

Delegates [to a Democratic convention at Iowa City] from a distance, who may wish to travel by the river, will find no inconvenience in obtaining conveyances to the City. The stable of Mr. St. John is supplied with good and easy carriages in abundance for the probable demand.—*Bloomington Herald*, (Muscatine), May 28, 1841.

NOTABLE DEATHS

GRANVILLE WALTER BARR, physician and journalist, died in Spartanburg, South Carolina, March 29, 1939. Born on October 25, 1860, in Medway, Ohio, he was the son of Dr. Jacob Cullen Barr and Kate Doll Barr. In 1872 he removed with the family to Lawrence County, Illinois. After graduating from the Mt. Carmel High School of Mt. Carmel, Illinois, and after an interlude in newspaper work in several Indiana towns, Mr. Barr entered the Indiana-Asbury University, now DePauw, from which he was graduated in 1883. A brief period at Rush Medical College, Chicago, preceded his study for a degree from Jefferson Medical College, Philadelphia, in 1884. He immediately located in Bridgeport, Illinois, where he continued his practice until 1890-91, when he accepted an offer to join the faculty of the College of Physicians and Surgeons at Keokuk, Iowa. While engaging in private practice he continued on the faculty until 1898, when he retired from the practice of medicine to re-enter the newspaper field. He was first city editor of the *Keokuk Constitution-Democrat*, then, the following year, assumed the same position with the *Keokuk Gate City*, being the managing editor as well. In 1902 he quit the *Gate City* position to publish the weekly *Standard*, which he continued until 1910.

While engaged in the newspaper work in Keokuk Mr. Barr contributed stories to various national magazines, *McClures*, *Lippincott's Success*, and others. In the meantime Mr. Barr demonstrated a lively interest in the civic affairs of the town, serving for many years on the school board and on the library board. He likewise was an organizer and supporter of Billy Sunday's evangelistic tours in vicinity of Keokuk. When the Keokuk dam was being built Mr. Barr enthusiastically served in the public relations department of the Mississippi River Power Company.

After a year in Burlington, 1924, where he was associated with the *Burlington Gazette*, Mr. Barr turned southwards. At the time of his death he was an associate editor of the *Yorkville Enquirer* of York, South Carolina.

CAROLYN MARGARET OGILVIE, a former newspaperwoman and journalist, died in Seattle, Washington, June 6, 1939. Born in Oskaloosa, Iowa, in 1857, the daughter of Rev. Robert A. McAycaal, D. D. and Mary Sharpe McAycaal, she was educated in the public schools of Oskaloosa, graduating from the high school there and also from the high school of Lawrence, Massachusetts. She later was graduated from Monmouth College, Illinois. In 1888 she married George Ogilvie in Lawrence, Massachusetts. In 1903 she acquired control of the *Des Moines Mail and Times*, continuing to edit the paper until 1906, when she disposed of her interests and began the publication of the *Midwest-*

ern Magazine, of family and commercial content. She continued in the publication of the latter magazine until 1920-21, and after some time removed from Iowa to the west coast. At one time she was the president of the Iowa Press and Authors Association.

JAMES ARTHUR DEVITT, born June 1, 1872, at DeWitt, Clinton County, Iowa, died at Oskaloosa, Iowa, June 30, 1939, aged 67 years. Mr. Devitt was active in the practice of law, took a large part in political and civic affairs and held several offices acceptably. He entered upon the practice of his profession in Oskaloosa immediately after his graduation from the law department of the State University in 1897. He had as a partner at first, W. C. Burrell, a fellow graduate, later was associated with J. C. Eichorn, and more recently had his son, James Lewelling Devitt, as an associate. He maintained for 42 years continually a law office in one place. His law practice covered a wide range and included an extensive corporation practice for railroad and utility companies. During all his life he had an active and influential part in political affairs. He was a member of the Republican state committee, and always interested himself in state and local affairs. He was appointed in 1913 to the committee of examiners for admission to the bar and had only a short time ago been reappointed to continue in that work. He was a member of the American Bar association, and represented Iowa on its general council, and was at one time president of the Iowa Bar association. He was county attorney of Mahaska county, 1922-23. He took a large part in church and lodge work. He interested himself in all civic activities and was especially effective in development of the highways radiating from his home city.

Mr. Devitt was son of Mr. and Mrs. John P. Devitt of Clinton county, and he was married Aug. 20, 1902, at Eldora to Pauline Lewelling, daughter of Governor L. D. Lewelling of Kansas, then a resident of Iowa. Three children survive—James L., Tiah (Mrs. Johansen) and John B., and two grandchildren.

MARY CARPENTER CRAIG SHRECK passed away at her home in Redlands, California, March 27, 1939, at the age of 70 years. She was the daughter of George J. Carpenter, one of the founders of Drake University, and its first chancellor, and a niece of General Francis M. Drake, also one of the founders of the university to which his name was given.

Mrs. Shreck was a student at the university when it first opened, and received a Bachelor of Philosophy degree from Drake. After graduation from Drake she joined the staff of a Chicago religious paper. In 1897 she succeeded her mother, Henrietta Drake Carpenter, as University Librarian. Later she became girls' advisor, and in 1901, Dean of Women, retaining for a short time general supervision of the library.

In 1908 she resigned as Dean of Women, and on September 10 of that year married Chancellor Craig, the second chancellor of the university.

They removed to Denver, Colorado, where Dr. Craig was pastor of the Broadway Church of Christ, which he founded; later they went to New York, and then to Redlands, California, where he became pastor. In 1913 he was seriously injured in an automobile accident from which he never recovered, in 1916 he died. In 1918 she returned to Drake to become Dean of Women for a second time. She again resigned as Dean of Women in 1930, to marry Dr. John Addison Shreck of Redlands, California, who survives.

DAVID W. SMOUSE, former Des Moines physician, died in Los Angeles, Cal., Sunday, July 2, 1939. He was born in the state of Maryland, where he attended school, graduating in 1876 from the University of Maryland Medical College. Immediately after graduation he located in Monroe, Iowa, where he practiced four years before removing to Des Moines. The following year he was married to Miss Amanda H. Cummings. A family physician of the old mould, he enjoyed a successful practice in Des Moines for thirty-five years before retiring and taking up a residence in California. In 1913 he was elected president of the Polk County Medical Association.

Dr. Smouse will be remembered for his philanthropies in the interests of handicapped children for many years by those who never knew the man. In 1930 he offered the Des Moines school board \$333,000 for the construction of a school for handicapped children, which, when built, was named the David W. Smouse Opportunity School. In 1933 and again in 1936 he gave additional bequests to the Des Moines school board for educational purposes.

